

**The First International Pali Conference  
in Shan State, Myanmar**

**Theravāda Buddhasāsanasobhanā**



**Program  
&  
Short Biographies**

**"Influential Figures in Learning or Meditation  
in Theravada Buddhism in 19-20<sup>th</sup> Centuries"**

Organized by Shan State Sangha Council  
In Honour of the 50th Birthday Celebration of  
Ven. Prof. Dr. Khammai Dhammasami, DPhil (Oxford)

Veluwan Monastery, Taunggyi, Shan State, Myanmar

18-19 December 2558/2014

The First International Pāli Conference  
in Shan State, Myanmar

Theravāda Buddhasāsanasobhanā

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17993

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## Preface

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### *The First Pāli Conference in Shan State*

The First-ever International Pāli Conference in Shan State, the Republic of Union of Myanmar is taking place at the Veluwan Monastery, Taunggyi on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of December 2014. The Shan State of the Union of Myanmar is a stronghold of Theravada Buddhism. Here many of the different nationalities such as Shan, Pa-O and Ta'ang, possess a centuries-old Theravada Buddhist literatures composed in poetic and elaborate style in their own languages. The contents of their literature are derived from the Pāli Suttas and commentaries. Works with stories are more popular here. The poetic style work is intended for listening, rather than reading, and its rhyming forms a prominent feature of the composition. In Shan, it is called *Lik Luong*, the Great Text. However, Pāli as a subject of study was not widely available here until the Second World War. This is why, in addition to the stimulating scholarly atmosphere it brings, this Pāli speaking conference is also a matter of pride and great joy for the whole Sangha and Theravada Buddhists of the Shan State of the Union of Myanmar.

### *This International Gathering and the Chosen Theme*

At this conference, scholars from sixteen universities in nine countries will present short biographies of some selected influential figures of the Theravada Buddhist world in both study (*pariyatti*) and meditation (*paṭipatti*) during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Unlike in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, not many scholarly attempts have been made in any country or language in the past to explore and record the life and work of

important Theravada masters who have greatly contributed to the continuity and growth of the Buddha's teachings. We hope this conference will inspire other researchers to pay more attention to this crucial issue.

The choice of the influential figures of the Theravada world in this conference is largely determined by the limited time available to scholars and the accessibility of reading materials within reach. It is also more of a matter of convenience that Myanmar and Sri Lanka count slightly more than half of the total. And that some Shan/Tai speaking monastics feature half of those from Myanmar is simply because the young Pāli scholars, with university education outside Myanmar, organizing this conference are all the pupils of the Venerable Dr. Dhammasami and from the Shan State. They are obviously more familiar with the life of some leading figures within their own monastic community.

However, it has to be stressed here that we the organizers of this conference are fully aware that there is a much greater number of very many important text-masters and meditation-masters in this nation and beyond, even if they remain beyond our reach this time. With our modest effort in bringing together Pāli scholars of some standing from many universities around Asia, we wish to genuinely implore scholars and others interested in the subject from any nationality, language group or region to help take the subject forward. We look forward to benefiting from a collective effort in preserving and promoting the inspiring life as well as important work of more Theravada Buddhist leaders in the field of both study and practice.

## *On the Birthday of Venerable Prof. K. Dhammasami*

The Venerable Prof. K. Dhammasami, an Oxford University scholar, was the one who has made so much effort to revive Pāli as an international conference medium. In his position as the Executive Secretary of the International Theravada Buddhist Universities (ITBU), he successfully initiated a Pāli paper presentation panel at the 2<sup>nd</sup> ITBU conference held in March 2009 at Sitagu International Buddhist Academy, Sagaing. Before that, even Pāli scholars far more learned than him were not confident enough to create an international forum for scholars well-versed in Pāli this way. But he has had that confidence as well as the international academic connection to make that happen.

Indeed, in October of the same year, he was also mainly responsible for organizing another international Pāli speaking conference to mark the 96<sup>th</sup> Birthday of the late Sangharaja of Thailand, His Holiness Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara (1913-2013), at Mahamakut Buddhist University, Thailand. On both occasions, Pāli scholars from both East and West participated. Since then, often time a Pāli medium panel has been a feature in international Buddhist conferences in Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand. It is only logical therefore that some of those Pāli scholars would want to mark the Golden Jubilee Birthday Celebration of the Venerable Prof. Dhammasami with a Pāli medium conference.

### *Organizers and Sponsors*

This Pāli conference is organized by the Shan State Sangha Council, established in 1957, to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday Anniversary of Ven. Prof. Dr. Khammai Dhammasami (D.Phil,

Oxford) and it is co-sponsored by many monasteries connected with his monastic life and work.

Among those many monasteries, the choice of *Veluwan* of Taunggyi is a coincidence of factors: it was at Veluwan that the Venerable Dr. Dhammasami started a proper Pāli study as a nine and half years old novice in 1973 under the present abbot, the Most Venerable Vijaya (*Dhammacariya, Aggamahā-gantha-vacaka-paṇḍita*), who was then the deputy abbot and principal. Taunggyi is the capital of Shan State, with good transport and facilities and is on the way to Laikha (Lecha), the birthplace of the Venerable where he is celebrating his birthday for the first time with some local development programs. On the part of the Venerable himself, however, it was an easy decision to organize it here because by holding this conference at Veluwan he can express the gratitude he owes his teacher at this and other monasteries while celebrating half a century of his life.

The Venerable Prof. Dr. K. Dhammasami spends all his life studying the Buddha's teaching at many monasteries and universities inside and outside Myanmar. Noticeably, he has spent some considerable times at Kan Gyi Pariyatti Institute in Yawnghwe (Nyaung Shwe) and Sasana Mandaing Pali University in Bago (Hamsavati). It was at those two places that he has mainly learnt Pāli. In Sri Lanka, at the Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya, he edited a Pāli sub-commentary (*ṭika*) text on Abhidhamma for his Master of Philosophy Degree. After gaining a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in the field of Theravada Buddhist monastic education at the Oriental Institute, University of Oxford, Britain

in 2004, he has examined a few PhD theses on translation of Pāli commentaries (*atthakathā*).

### ***A Different Venue and a New Theme***

In 2014, five years after it was first successfully revived in Myanmar and Thailand with the help of many Pāli scholars, the Pāli speaking international conference may no longer be a novelty in other places; yet it is still an entirely new undertaking for Pāli scholars, monastic and lay alike, in the whole Shan State, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. This is the first time ever such an international gathering of Pāli scholars taking place here. That said, certainly the chosen theme itself is somewhat new to the whole Theravada Buddhist academic world: ***Celebrate and Honor the Life and Work of some Influential Figures in Learning and Meditation in Theravada Buddhism in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.***

Until we all can invest more effort on the subject of discussion here to reflect the dedication of our past Theravada Buddhist masters, for now we truly believe this international Pāli speaking conference will raise awareness of the importance of scholarly study in the biography of key figures in the Theravada Buddhist world and further advance the cause of Pāli as the medium of Theravāda scholarly communication.

### ***Brief Biographies of Some Influential Theravada Figures***

This booklet also contains some biographies in English of some selected Theravada masters, mostly but not exclusively the focus of the papers. This is generally to help introduce their life and work to the readers and participants.

However these biographies are too short to do justice to the achievements of those praiseworthy masters. Despite this, we believe that such a humble undertaking may at least help shed more light onto this crucial area of study. Besides, this is also intended to help for the non-Pāli scholars to grasp the subject matter of the discussion which they may otherwise have no opportunity to familiarize themselves with.

### *Two Public Lectures*

In addition to the Pāli conference, there will be two special lectures in English on the collaboration of *Buddhist mindfulness practice and science*. Nowadays, mindfulness meditation is gaining a drastic increase of attention among the intellectuals and educated folks in the West. New books on meditation keep coming out and some of the old ones also get reprinted often. The world, especially the urbanized one, has increasingly taken up meditation. This is true in both Buddhist and non-Buddhist countries. It is a common sight now that books on mindfulness meditation, for example, by (1) the German Theravada scholar monk, Nyanaponika Thera, (2) the Sri Lankan meditation master in the USA, Bhante H. Gunaratana Thera and (3) Zen Buddhist Master Thich Nhat Hanh, adorn bookshops in major airports around the world.

In simple terms, the demand has rocketed not only among the traditional Buddhist communities but also among the scientists who have started publishing articles and books on mindfulness meditation since the early 1980s. The scientist communities worldwide published only one paper on the subject in 1982; but eight years on the number jumps to a three digit, 228 papers/books in 1990, 353 in 2000, 397 in 2011 and 477 in 2012. A small book on mindfulness meditation by the name of

*Mindfulness Meditation Made Easy* by the Venerable Dr. Dhammasami has been reprinted eight times for the last 15 years in Malaysia, Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Myanmar in four languages plus the Korean translation that has been made available only online. This includes the Spanish translation by Ricardo Guerrero that was launched at the *Colegio Profesional de la Educación* in Madrid in January this year and a translation in the Hungarian and Serbian languages published in August and September respectively, also, this year.

To reflect this growing popularity of mindfulness meditation in the West, the Venerable Dr. Dhammasami has requested two of his colleagues in the field to speak on the subject. The first is Prof. Padmasiri De Silva, PhD (Hawaii), of Monash University, Australia who will be speaking on: “*Exploring Embodied Emotions and Body-Mind Reactivity; According to the Satipaṭṭhāna & Current Neurology*”. Prof. de Silva, now 81, studies the Pāli Tipiṭaka and Western Philosophy before working on psychotherapy in Australia. The other is Dr. Yeoh Kar Kheng, DPhil (Oxon), School of Chemical Science, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Penang, Malaysia. He graduated with a Doctor of Philosophy in Chemistry from Oxford University, Britain where he met the Venerable Dr. Dhammasami as a meditation teacher. He will be speaking on: “*Modern Applications of Mindfulness in Different Areas (Psychology, Corporate, Business, Schools, etc) and the Development of Mindfulness in Malaysia*”. The two lectures will offer two different perspectives of mindfulness meditation practice: Prof. de Silva from a philosopher and Buddhist scholar’s angle while Dr. Yeoh from a scientist viewpoint.

It is the generous intention of the Venerable Dr. Dhammasami that these two lectures on mindfulness meditation are being organized for the public in Taunggyi. He has a concern that the discussion at the Pāli conference will be inaccessible to the majority of the people with no Pāli knowledge, and decides to arrange these lectures as a gift to the people of Taunggyi and beyond. Indeed, the Venerable has been instrumental in disseminating mindfulness research related information in Myanmar; he initiated in 2011 an annual conference of Buddhist meditation and Psychology at International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University (ITBMU), Yangon where he serves as a professor to inform and update Myanmar scholars on the development of scientists' engagement with Buddhist mindfulness meditation.

### ***Sadhu Sadhu Sadhu to our Collective Efforts***

This international Pāli conference in Taunggyi is made possible with the generosity of many people here in Myanmar and abroad. The international and domestic air tickets for scholars are sponsored by many devotees of the Oxford Buddha Vihara in Britain, Singapore, Malaysia, and Myanmar. Sky Star Hotel, My Hotel and Ruby Hotel Yangon and Shwe Kyun Hotel and Hark Hom Hotel in Taunggyi provide free accommodation for scholars. (1) Kusalasamaggī Dhammacakka Group (2) Thoont Mao Social Group (3) Sujātā Nangkalyā Dhammacakka Group and Numkoun Shan Parahita Association offer meals for the entire period of the conference. Golden Flying Tiger (Shwe Kya Phyan) Family, Taunggyi, donated Hand Luggages, and U Ko Ko Aung & Daw Theen Tin Aung, Son, Mong Ming Thiha Aung, Mong Jeyya Aung and Daughter, Ma Devi Aung, Yangon make generous contribution for printing conference proceedings. Devotees from monasteries in Taunggyi such as Wat Veluwan, Wat Pitaka,

Wat Jengtung, Sathon Mūlaminkoon Sāsanaman Aung Meditation Center, Ganthavipassanālaṅkāra and Sumanaceti generously provide many kinds of assistance, including transport and volunteering. Devotees from UK, Thailand, Singapore, Barcelona, as well as Myanmar donated financial expense for domestic and international ticket.

The Shan State Government also provides much help including matters related to the foundation stone laying ceremony of the Shan State Buddhist University on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2014. This is the first Buddhist orientated university for Shan State. The Government of Shan State also donates saplings of 5,000 hardwood trees to be planted in Laikha, the hometown of the Venerable Prof. K. Dhammasami to mark his 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday.

Indeed, we must record here the constant encouragement and support that the Vice President (I) of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, His Excellency Dr. Sai Mauk Kham and family have been offering to the celebrations of the golden jubilee birthday of the Venerable Prof. Dr. K. Dhammasami in general, and this conference in particular. His Excellency's family is the main sponsor of the new Sangha ward constructed as part of the birthday celebrations in the Laikha Hospital as well as of the free eye clinics for the people during the period of the celebrations.

We are grateful to all of the donors and sponsors for their generosity, hard work and collaboration in making this conference possible. We wish to share the joy and merits in organizing this academic event with all living beings.

May the Lord Buddha's teaching last forever and spread to every corner of the world. May peace prevail on earth.

The Organizing Committee

# The Program of The First International Pali Conference in Shan State

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The First International Pali Conference in Shan State

## “Influential Figures in Learning or Meditation in Theravada Buddhism in 19-20th Centuries”

Organized by Shan State Sangha Council in honour of the 50th Birthday Celebrations of  
Venerable Prof. Dr. Khammai Dhammasami, D.Phil (Oxford), UK  
At Veluwan Monastery, Taunggyi, Shan State, Myanmar  
15-19 Dec. 2014 (5 Days)

Tel: (+853) 42018766, (+95) 95214771, (+95) 91212197, Fax: (+853) 42066244  
Email: ipics2014@gmail.com, nyamasami@gmail.com, yechanet@gmail.com



### Key Dates

16 <sup>th</sup> December 2014	Arrival of oversea delegates in Yangon
17 <sup>th</sup> December 2014 14:30	Transit from Yangon to Taunggyi by domestic flight
17 <sup>th</sup> December 2014 19:00	Dhamma Talk by Most Venerable Sitagu Sayadaw Dr. Ashin Nyanissara, Chancellor and Chairman of the Bord of Director, Sitagu International Buddhist Academy, Sagaing  Venue: Veluwan Monastery, Taunggyi
18-19 <sup>th</sup> December 2014	Conference and Public lectures
20 <sup>th</sup> December 2014	Sightseeing to Inle Lake, Ywaghwe (Nyaung Shwe) or a day return trip to Laikha (Lecha)
21 <sup>st</sup> December 2014 10:20	Oversea delegates departure from Taunggyi to Yangon
22 <sup>nd</sup> December 2014	Oversea delegates departure from Yangon

**The 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration of  
Ven.Prof.Dr.Khammai Dhammasami, DPhil (Oxford)**

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**Programme**

**Thursday, 18 December 2014 at the Aggasītalānkāra Conference Hall, Veluwan Monastery, Taunggyi, Shan State, Myanmar**

**Morning Session**

06:30-7:30 hrs	Breakfast at Veluwan Monastery
07:30-8:00 hrs	Arrival of Mahāsaṃgha and Delegates at the Aggasītalānkāra Conference Hall
<b>08:00-09:30</b>	<b>Opening ceremony</b>
08:00-08:05	Lighting lamp by the Most Venerable Vijaya Mahāthera, Abbot, Veluwan Monastery, Taunggyi
08:05-08:10	Reciting <i>Namo tassa</i> in homage to the Buddha led By Venerable Revata Dhammakathika, Advisory Committee, The 1 <sup>st</sup> International Pāli Conference in Shan State, Wat Mwe Taw, Murng Kueng, Shan State, Myanmar
08:10-08:20	<b>Sammodaniyakathā (Opening Speech)</b> by Most Ven. Dr. Paññānanda, Chairman of Shan State Sangha Council and Deputy General Secretary of the State Saṃgha Mahānāyaka Committee of Myanmar
08:20-08:30	<b>Opening Speech</b> by Most Venerable Sitagu Sayadaw Dr. Ashin Nyanissara, Chancellor and Chairman of the Bord of Director, Sitagu International Buddhist Academy, Sagain
08:30-08:40	<b>Sammodaniyakathā (Opening Speech)</b> by Most Venerable Phra Dhammapundit, Abbot, Rama 9 Golden Jubilee Temple and Member of the Supreme Sangha Council of Thailand, Advissory Committee of the 1 <sup>st</sup> International Pali Conference in Shan State, Myanmar
08:40-08:50	<b>Sammodaniyakathā (Opening Speech)</b> by Tipitakadhara Sayadaw Venerable Gandhamālānkara
08:50-09:00	<b>Welcome Speech</b> by Sao Aung Myat, The Chief Minister of Shan State, Myanmar

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09:00-09:10	<b>Pāthakathā (Keynote Speech)</b> by Ven. M. Wimalagnāna, Senior Lecturer, Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka
09:10-09:20	<b>Offering gifts</b> by Sao Aung Myat, The Chief Minister of Shan State, Myanmar  <b>MC:</b> Ven. Devinda, Dhammācariya, PhD Candidate, Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand  Ven. Vicitta, Dhammācariya, MA (Kelaniya) Taung Pauk Monastery, Mawlamyine
09:20-09:30	<b>Opening Photo exhibition of Influential Figures in Theravāda Buddhism</b>  ➤ Chanting Jayanto gāthā by Mahāsaṃgha Led by Ven. Dr. P. Gnānarāma, Principal, Pali and Buddhist College of Singapore  ➤ Opening Photo Exhibition by Sao Aung Myat, The Chief Minister of the Shan State and Dr. R. Panth, Director, Nava Nalanda Mahavihar, India  <b>MC:</b> Ven. Vicitta, Dhammācariya, MA (Kelaniya)  Ven. Mahosadhālaṅkāra, Dhammācariya, Mahāganthavācaka paṇḍita, PhD candidate (Peradeniya)
09:30-09:40	<b>Group Photo</b>
09:40-09:50	Mahāsaṃgha and Delegates Returning Back to Aggasītalāṅkāra Conference Hall
09:50-10:40	Paper reading session I <b>Influential Figures in Learning (Pariyatti)</b>

The 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration of  
Ven.Prof.Dr.Khammai Dhammasami, DPhil (Oxford)

	<p><b>Moderator:</b> Ven. Prof. Dr. K. Dhammasāmi, Professor ITBMU, Myanmar &amp; Fellow &amp; Buddhist Chaplain at University of Oxford, UK</p> <p><b>MC:</b> Ven. Nāṇasāmīlāṅkāra, MA (Kelaniya), MPhil Candidate, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka</p> <p>1. Most Ven Dr. P. Gnanarama, PhD, D.Litt, Principal of Pali and Buddhist College, Singapore <b>Saṅkhepavasena Buddhadatta-mahānāyaka mahātherassa apadānaṃ</b> (<i>Aggamahāpaṇḍita Ven. Polwatte Buddhadatta Mahānāyaka Thera (1887-1962) of Sri Lanka: Professor of Pali, Author and a Leader of the Sixth Buddhist Council</i>)</p> <p>2. Dr. R. Panth, Director, Nava Nalanda Mahavihara (Deemed University) Nalanda, Bihar, India: <b>Mahātherassa Jagadīsakassapassa Jivanto Kittithambho ca Navanālandā mahāvihāro</b> (<i>Mahathera Ven. Jagdish Kashyap (1908 -1976) of India and His life achievement – Nava Nalanda Mahavihara</i>)</p>
10:30-11:00	Scholars Tree Planting Marking the Occasion
11:10 –12:00hrs	Luncheon
12:00-12:30	<p><b>Ācariyapūjā</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Arrival of all Venerables, Selected Distinguished Ācariya Theras and Staff members led by Ven. Prof. Dr. Khammai Dhammasami at Dhammarāma Hall, Veluwan Monastery, Taunggyi, Shan State, Myanmar</li> <li>➤ All Staff members led by Ven. Prof. Dr. Khammai Dhammasami paying respect</li> </ul>

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	<p>to Ven. Selected Distinguished Ācariya Theras with vandanakathā, "Vandāmi bhante sabbam aparādham etc."</p> <p><b>MC:</b> Ven. Mahosadhālaṅkāra (Dhammācariya, Mahāganthavācakapaṇḍita), PhD candidate, (University of Peradeniya), Sri Lanka</p>
12:30-13:00	Arrival of Mahāsaṅgha and Delegates at the Aggasītalāṅkāra Conference Hall
13:00-14:40 hrs	<p>Paper reading session II <b>Influential Figures in Learning (Pariyatti)</b> <b>Moderator</b> Prof. Ratna Wijetunge, Ph.D, Post graduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka <b>MC:</b> Ven. Dr. M. Khemananda, MCU, Thailand</p> <p>1. Ven. M. Vimalagñāṇa, Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka: <b>Vijjodayapariveṇe paṭhamā rambhako- Sirisumaṅgalayatissaro</b> (<i>Venerable Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala Thera (1827- 1911) of Sri Lanka: The Founder of Vidyodaya Pirivena Institute in Sri Lanka</i>)</p> <p>2. Ven. Nāṇasāmīlaṅkāra, MA (Kelaniya), MPhil Candidate, Peradeniya Sri Lanka: <b>Dhammodayavihāre Nevāsiko Ājeyya Mahāthero</b> (<i>Aggamahāpaṇḍita Venerable Ājeyya (1927- ) of Shan State. Myanmar: Founder of Pariyatti examinations in a vernacular language in Kengtung, Shan State, Myanmar</i>)</p> <p>3. Ven. Dr. M. Wijithadhamma, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka: PhD (Pali), Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Sri Jayewardenepura,</p>

The 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration of  
Ven.Prof.Dr.Khammai Dhammasami, DPhil (Oxford)

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	<p>Nugegoda, Sri Lanka: <b>Yātrāmulle Dhammārāma Mahātthero (1829-1872): Ekūnavīsatime Vohārasatavasse Siri Laṅkāya Yuropīyānāṃ Pāli Ācariyo</b> (<i>Ven. Yātrāmulle Dharmārāma (1829-1872) of Sri Lanka: The Pāli Teacher of Europeans in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Sri Lanka</i>)</p> <p>4. Ven. Dr. W. Piyaratana, Lecturer, Mahachulalongkomrajavidyalaya University, Thailand: <b>Ko Panāyaṃ Rāhulo?</b> (<i>Aggamahāpaṇḍita Venerable Prof. Walpola Rahula (1907–1997) of Sri Lanka: An Internationally Known Scholar and Buddhist Leader</i>)</p>
14:40-15:00 hrs	Tea break
15:00 –17:05 hrs	<p>Paper reading session III <b>Influential Figures in learning (Pariyatti)</b> <b>Moderator:</b> Ven. Phra Dr. Somlak Gandhasarabhivamsa, Abbot of Wat Ta Ma-Oh, Lampang, Thailand</p> <p><b>MC:</b> Ven. Sīhanādālaṅkāra, BA, MA (Kelaniya), Mangala Yan Aung Meditation Center, Mung Nong, Shan State, Myanmar.</p> <p>1. Most Ven. Dr. Jnanapurnika Mahathera, Chief Abbot, Founder Principal, Vishwa Shanti Vihar, Theravāda Buddhist Academy, Kathmandu, Nepal: <b>Buddhassa Vijātabhūmi Nepālaratṭhassa Aggassa Pañcamassa Saṅha nāyakassa Buddhaghosa mahātheravarassa Theruppattikathā</b> (<i>Chief Saṅghanāyaka Buddhaghosa Mahasthavir (1921- 2011)-Nepal: A Scholar. Author and Buddhist Leader who</i></p>

# The Program of The First International Pali Conference in Shan State

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*Revived Theravada Buddhism in Nepal)*

2. Mr. Aruna K. Gamage, Lecturer, Dept of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka: **Ānandametteyya-jin'attaj'indo** (*Aggamahāpaṇḍita, Abhidhajamahāraṭṭha guru Venerable Balangoda Ananda Maitreya (1896 – 1998) of Sri Lanka: A Scholar, Unifier and Leader of the Sixth Buddhist Council)*

3. Ven. Devinda (Dhammācariya), PhD Candidate, Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand: **Marammaraṭṭhe pariyatti-paṭipatti-visāradassa Ledi Sayadaw'ti visuttassa therassa saṅkhepappavatti** (*Venerable Ledi Sayadaw U Nāṇadhaja (1846–1923), Myanmar: A Great Meditation Master and an Internationally Known Author)*

4. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Banjob Bannaruji, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Thailand: **Payutto Mahāthero Syāmaraṭṭhassa: Nānāvidesesu Paññāto santibhāvassa UNESCO-dāyam Dinno Dhīro** (*Venerable P. A. Payutto (Brahmagunabhorn) (1938- ) of Thailand: Internationally Known Scholar and Winner of UNESCO Prize for Peace Education -1994)*

5. Ven. Dr. M. Khemānanda, Lecturer, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Thailand: **Sāsanajotako Buddhadāso** (*Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu (1906 –1993) of Thailand: Who Revitalized the Dhamma in Modern Time and A UNESCO Personality of the Century)*

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**The 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration of  
Ven.Prof.Dr.Khammai Dhammasami, DPhil (Oxford)**

17:05 –18:00 hrs	Soft drink for Saṃgha & dinner for laity
<b>Public Lecture</b>	
<b>Banquet Hall, Shan Literary and Cultural Association, Taunggyi</b>	
18:00-18:30	Arrival of Mahāsaṃgha and Delegates at the Banquet Hall
18:30-18:45	Welcome Speech by Sai Loong Seng, The Chairman of Shan State Parliament, Shan State, Republic of the Union of Myanmar
18:45:19:00	Introductory Speech by Ven. Prof. Dr. Khammai Dhammasami, DPhil (Oxford), University of Oxford, UK, Professor ITBMU
19:00 –20:30hrs	Lecture on: <b>“Embodied Emotions &amp; Body-mind Reactivity: According to the Satipaṭṭhāna &amp; Current Neurology”</b> by Prof. Padmasiri de Silva, PhD (Hawaii), University of Monash, Australia
20:30-21:00	Local Cultural Performance
MC:	MC: Ven. Paññābhoga (Dhammācariya), PhD Candidate, Mahidol University, Thailand & Ven. Dr. Seng Hurng Narinda (Dhammācariya), Ph.D (Peradeniya), Lecturer, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Bangkok, Thailand

**Friday, 19 December 2014 – Aggasītālaṅkāra Conference Hall, Veluwan Monastery**

06:30–07:30 hrs	Breakfast at Veluwan Monastery
07:30-08:00 hrs	Arrival of Mahāsaṃgha and Delegates at the

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Aggasītalāṅkāra Conference Hall

Conference Session IV

**Influential Figures in Learning (Pariyatti)**

**Moderator:** Mr. Aruna K. Gamage, Lecturer,  
Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies,  
University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

**MC:** . Ven. Mahosadhālaṅkāra, Ph.D Candidate  
University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

1. Prof. Ratna Wijetunge, PhD, Postgraduate  
Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University  
of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka: **Siri Laṅkāyaṃ**  
**Samghanetā Vajirāravāsī Nārada Mahā**  
**Thero** (*Narada Maha Thera (1898 –1983) of Sri*  
*Lanka: An Internationally Renowned Dhamma*  
*Exponent from Sri Lanka*)

08:00–09:40 hrs

2. Phra Maha Dr. Chatchai, Head of  
Educational Administration, Mahamakut  
University, Thailand: **Sangharājanidānakathā**  
(*Somdet Phramaha Samana Chao*  
(*Vajiranyanavarorasa*) (1860-1921) of  
Thailand: *The 10<sup>th</sup> Supreme Patriarch of*  
*Thailand who helped Institutionalize Thai*  
*Buddhism, Author of Naktham textbooks and*  
*Founder of Mahamakut Buddhist University*)

3. Dr. Vjittha Kumara, Lecturer, Faculty of  
Social Science & Humanities, Mahidol  
University, Thailand: **Sīhaladīpe Vādibhasīho:**  
**Mohottivatte Guṇānandassa**  
**Mahāyativarassa Apadānaṃ** (*The Biography*  
*of Venerable Mohottivatte Gunananda (1823-*  
*1890) of Sri Lanka: The Indomitable Buddhist*

**The 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration of  
Ven.Prof.Dr.Khammai Dhammasami, DPhil (Oxford)**

	<p><i>Debater in Ceylon)</i></p> <p>4. Ven. Prof. Dr. K. Dhammasāmi, Professor ITBMU, Myanmar &amp; Fellow &amp; Buddhist Chaplain at University of Oxford, UK: <b>Bhikkhu Bodhi Mahāthero (1944 - )</b>: <b>Tepiṭakam Pālibhāsāya Angalisabhāsam Abhinava-parivattako Mahāpaṇḍito</b> (<i>Venerable Bhikkhu Bodhi (1944- ) of USA: One of the Best-known Tipitaka Translators of Our Time</i>)</p>
09:40:10:00	Break time
10:00–11:15 hrs	<p>Conference Session V <b>Influential Figures in Learning (Pariyatti)</b></p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Dr. R. Panth, Director, Nava Nalanda Mahavihara (Deemed University) Nalanda, Bihar, India</p> <p><b>MC:</b> Phra Maha Dr. Chatchai, Head of Educational Administration, Mahamakut Buddhist University, Bangkok, Thailand</p> <p>1. Ven. Mahosadhālaṅkāra, Ph.D Candidate University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka: <b>Syāmamaṇḍale Saṃghamahānakassa Tipikaṃ Syāmabhāsāparivattane parināyakassa Paññābhogamahātherassa pavatti</b> (<i>Saṃgha Mahānāyaka Venerable Paññābhoga of Murng Su (1892-1971), Shan State, Myanmar: The Leader of the Tipitaka Translation into Tai/Shan</i>)</p> <p>2. Ven. Prof. Dr. Therinda, State Pariyatti Sasana University, Yangon, Myanmar: <b>Mahāsī</b></p>

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**theravarassa guṇānubhāvappaṭisaṃyuttā  
sārakathā**

*(Aggamahāpaṇḍita Mahasi Sayadaw (1904–1982) of Myanmar: A Meditation Master and Leader of the Sixth Buddhist Council)*

3. Prof. Dr. Mahesh Deokar, Pune

University, India: **Vipassanāya aggadūto**

**saccanārāyaṇo goyankā** *(S. N. Goenka (1924–2013) of Myanmar/India: A noted Burmese-Indian Teacher Who Reintroduced Vipassana Meditation to India and Beyond)*

4. Ven. Sumanālaṅkāra, (Dhammācariya) Nam  
Jet Lin Monastery, Kyawk Mae, Shan State,

Myanmar: **Aggamahāpaṇḍita**

**Abhidhajamahāraṭṭhaguru Tipitakadhara**

**Mingun Sayadaw'ti Pākaṭassa Vicittasārā**

**bhivaṃsa mahāther uppattikathāya**

**piṇḍattho** *(Aggamahāpaṇḍita*

*Abhidhajamahāraṭṭhaguru Tipitakadhara*

*Venerable Mingun Sayadaw U*

*Vicittasārābhivaṃsa (1911–1993) of Myanmar:*

*A Leader of the Sixth Buddhist Council and*

*Founder of Two Modern Buddhist Universities)*

11:15–12:00 hrs

Luncheon

12:00–12:30

Arrival of Scholars & Delegates at Conference  
Hall

12:30–14:10 hrs

Conference Session VI

**Influential Figures in Learning (Pariyatti) and  
Meditation (Paṭipatti)**

**Moderator:** Assoc. Prof. Dr. Banjob Bannaruji,

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Mahachulalongkonrajavidyalaya  
University, Thailand

MC: Ven. Nigrodha, Lecturer, Theravada  
Buddhist Academy, Kathmandu, Nepal

1. Phra Maha Pranom Dhammāṅkārō, Wat  
Chakdaeng, Thailand: **Bodhiñāṇattherassa  
aṭṭhuppattikathā** (*Ajahn Cha (1918–1992) of  
Thailand: Meditation Master Who Spread his  
Thai Forest Tradition in the West*)

2. Ven. Sīhanādāṅkārā, BA, MA (Kelaniya),  
Mangala Yan Aung Meditation Center, Mung  
Nong, Shan State, Myanmar: **Aggamahāpaṇḍita  
Mung Nongvāsī- Paṇḍita mahānāyakassa  
therupattikathā**  
(*Aggamahāpaṇḍita Venerable Paṇḍita of Mung  
Nong (1912-1989 ) of Shan State, Myanmar: A  
Vipassanā Meditation Master, Who Spread  
Vipassana Meditation among the Shan People in  
Myanmar*)

3. Ven. J. Dhammāloka, BA (Peradeniya),  
M.Phil Candidat, Department of Classical  
Languages, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka:  
**Sirilaṅkādiṭṭhe vipassanābhāvanam pattharane  
atipūjanīyassa Rerukāne  
Candawimalamahātherassa dāyakattam** (*Ven.  
Rerukane Chandawimala Thero, (1897-1996) of  
Sri Lanka: the Teacher of the Vipassanā  
Meditation in Sri Lanka*)

4. Ven. Paṇḍitasirī, Lecturer, International  
Theravāda Buddhist Missionary University,  
Yangon, Myanmar: (*Aggamahāpaṇḍita Mogok*)

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	<i>Sayadaw U Vimala (1899-1962) of Myanmar: A great Vipassana Meditation Master of Myanmar)</i>
14:10-13:30 hrs	Group Photo
14:30-15:00	Tea Break
15:00-15:30	Moderators Report
15:30-17:00 hrs	<p><b>Closing ceremony</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Presenting the certificate by Most Ven. Dr. Paññānanda, Chairman of Shan State Sangha Council and Deputy General Secretary of the State Saṃgha Mahānāyaka Committee of Myanmar</li> <li>➤ Closing Remark by Ven. Phra Sophonvachirabhorn (Sawai Chotiko), Thailand Advisory Committee, Deputy Rector for Foreign Affairs, Mahachulalongkorn Rajavidyalaya University, Bangkok, Thailand</li> <li>➤ Votes of thank by Ven. Prof. Dr. Khammai Dhammasami, DPhil (Oxford), University of Oxford, UK</li> <li>➤ Sharing of Meritorious deed</li> </ul> <p><b>MC:</b> Ven. Ñāṇasāmīlaṅkāra (Dhammācariya), MPhil Candidate (Peradeniya), Sri Lanka</p> <p>Ven. Paññābhoga (Dhammācariya), PhD Candidate, Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand</p>
17:00-18:00	Soft drink & dinner

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<b>Public Lecture</b>	
<b>Banquet Hall, Shan Literary and Cultural Association, Taunggyi</b>	
18:00-18:30	Arrival of all participants at the Banquet Hall, Shan Literary and Cultural Association, Taunggyi
18:30-18:45	Welcome Speech by Mr. Sao Thao, Patron of Shan Literary and Cultural Association, Taunggyi
18:45-19:00	Introductory Speech by Ven. Prof. Dr. Khammai Dhammasami, DPhil (Oxford), University of Oxford, UK, Professor ITBMU
19:00-20:30	Lecture on: <b>“Modern Applications of Mindfulness in Different Areas and the Development of Mindfulness in Malaysia”</b> by Dr. Yeoh Kar Kheng, DPhil (Oxford), School of Chemical Science, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Penang, Malaysia
MC:	<b>MC:</b> Ven.Vicitta (Dhammācariya), MA (Kelaniya),Taung Pauk Monastery, Mawlamyine Ven. Dr.Nawkhamla Dhammasami, PhD (Peradeniya), Lecturer, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Bangkok, Thailand

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**Saturday, 20 December 2014**

A trip to Laikha, Hometown of Ven. Prof. Dr. Khammai Dhammasami or a trip to the famous Inle Lake and Phaung-Taw-Oo Temple, In Ywaghwe (Nyaung Shwe)

05:30	Leaving Taunggyi for Laikha or
08:00	Leaving for Inle Lake

The 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration of  
Ven. Prof. Dr. Khammai Dhammasami, DPhil (Oxford)

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Theravāda Buddhasāsanasobhanā

Short Biographies

of

Influential Figures in Learning or Meditation  
in Theravada Buddhism in 19-20<sup>th</sup> Centuries

Collected by the Organizing Committee

The First International Pali Conference in Shan State

Organized by Shan State Sangha Council

in Honour of the 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration of

Ven. Prof. Dr. Khammai Dhammasami, DPhil (Oxford)

Veluwan Monastery, Taunggyi, Shan State, Myanmar

18-19 December 2558/2014

## Short Biographies of Influential Figures in Theravada Buddhism in 19-20<sup>th</sup> Centuries

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### Venerable Ledi Sayādaw

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Venerable Ledi Sayādaw, who is widely known to scholars and common people alike for his outstanding writings on difficult topics on Dhamma in lucid and clear style, was also one of the foremost in preaching the Dhamma among the masses during British Burma. It was not only for his writing that he is known, but for his meditation too. In fact, he blends the doctrinal aspect, studying the scriptures by heart (*pariyatti*), and practical aspect, practicing the contents of scriptures (*patipatti*) to the fullest.

He was born on 1<sup>st</sup> December, 1846 as Maung Tat Khaung. His father was U Tun Tha and mother Daw Kyene of Saing-pyin Village, in Sagaing Division of northern Myanmar. He was sent to his village monastery at the age of ten. After five years of monastic education, he was ordained as a novice (*sāmaṇera*) under Sayādaw U Nandadhaja, the chief monk of that monastery, and was renamed as Ñāṇadhaja. He, however, will not be known with this name in the later part of his life.

On 20 April 1866, at the age of 20, U Ñāṇadhaja was given higher ordination (*upasampadā*) under his old teacher Sayādaw U Nandadhaja. The following year he went Mandalay for his higher monastic education and stayed at Maṅgalā Sankyaung Taik. Maṅgalā Sankyaung Taik was one of the four hundred monasteries built by King Mindon when he shifted his capital from Amarapura to Mandalay. There, U Ñāṇadhaja studied under eminent teachers like Sankyaung Sayādaw, who is famous for translating *Visuddhimagga* into Burmese, Makutārāma Sayādaw, Salin Sayādaw and many other scholar-

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monks. U Ñāṇadhaja had thoroughly learned the *Piṭakas*, *Aṭṭhakathās* and *Tīkās* from those eminent Sayādaws.

In 1871, the Fifth Buddhist Council (*Pañcama Saṅgāyana*) was held in Mandalay, sponsored by King Mindon, where over 600 selected monks attended. The monks recited entire *tipiṭaka* in that Council to verify and authenticate the texts. The authenticated texts were later inscribed in marble slabs and housed it under small pagodas surrounding the Kuthodaw Pagoda at the foot of Mandalay Hill. It is said that U Ñāṇadhaja chanted the Fifth Book of Abhidhamma, the Kathāvatthu, from his memory, without any aid, and later had helped in editing the Abhidhamma texts.

He had spent sixteen years in Sankyaung Taik – nine years as a student and seven years as a teacher. He was a bright student of that monastery and that can be seen from the fact that when the Sayādaw of that monastery asked 2000 of his students to answer on twenty questions set out in Pāli on perfections (*pāramīs*) of a Buddha, a Pacceka-Buddha, and Sāvakas, none of them could answer except U Ñāṇadhaja. Those answers were later collected and published in 1880 in his first book – *Pāramī-dīpanī* (The Manual of Perfection).

After the death of King Mindon, in 1878, his son, Prince Thibaw ascended the throne of Mandalay Palace. It was during his fourth years' reign that devastated fires spread in Mandalay and engulfed many historical buildings, and damage the capital extensively, including the Royal Palace and Sankyaung Taik. In that fire, U Ñāṇadhaja had lost many of his precious books and notes. Thereafter, U Ñāṇadhaja, in 1882, decided to leave

## Short Biographies of Influential Figures in Theravada Buddhism in 19-20<sup>th</sup> Centuries

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Mandalay for Monywa, a small district town situated on the river Chindwin, in Upper Myanmar.

In Monywa, he stayed at U Wine Monastery, where he taught Pāli grammar and Abhidhamma to *bhikkhus* and *sāmaṇeras*, who came from different monasteries to learn from him. In Mandalay, soon after the Second Anglo-Burmese War, in 1885, British conquered Burma, and King Thibaw was exiled to India.

After teaching for many years, U Ñāṇadhaja lately made up his mind to lead a secluded life and devote more time in intensive meditation. Thus, in 1886, he retreated to nearby forest known as Ledi, north of Monywa. There, he used to live under the shade of trees, as a forest dweller. Later, his old and new students too followed him to the forest and requested him to teach the scriptures and about Vipassana meditation. Human habitation gradually increased in Ledi forest and many small huts (*kutis*) started to spring up housing all those who came there to live and learn. Those groups of small huts would later come to be known as Ledi monastery. Henceforth, U Ñāṇadhaja, drawing its name from that monastery will become famous as Ledi Sayādaw.

Having based himself in that monastery, Ledi Sayādaw wrote many books in a very simple and plain language, which appeal scholars and non-scholars alike. He had clarified many abstruse and complicated points of Dhamma through his writings and had corrected many errors that had crept into some early writings. He, at the same time, travelled throughout Myanmar to preach Dhamma and led vipassana meditation retreat.

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The British government, in 1911, noted his contribution in the field of Buddhist scriptures and popularizing the vipassana meditation among renunciates and laymen alike, and honoured him by conferring the title of 'Aggamahāpaṇḍita' on him. He was also awarded a Doctorate of Literature (*honoris causa*) by the University of Rangoon.

He passed away on 27<sup>th</sup> June, 1923, at the age of 77, in Pyinmana, between Rangoon and Mandalay.

*Some of his notable works:*

**In Pāli:**

1. *Paramattha-dīpanī* or *Abhidhammattha-saṅgaha Mahā Tikā*
2. *Nirutti-dīpanī*
3. *Anu-dīpanī*
4. *Sāsanasampattidīpanī*
5. *Sāsanavipattidīpanī*
6. *Patthanuddesadīpanī*
7. *Sammādiṭṭhidīpanī*
8. *Padhāna Sutta*
9. *Anattavibhāvana.*
10. *Yamaka Puccha Visajjana*
11. *Niyamadīpanī*
12. *Vipassanadīpanī*

**English Translations:**

13. *A Manual of the Excellent Man (Uttamapurisa Dīpanī),*  
(BPS, Kandy, Sri Lanka, 2000)

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14. *A Manual of Mindfulness of Breathing (Ānāpāna Dīpanī)*, (BPS, Kandy, Sri Lanka, W.P. No. 431/432)
15. *The Manual of Insight (Vipassanā Dīpanī)*, (BPS, Kandy, Sri Lanka, W.P. No. 31/32)
16. *The Buddhist Philosophy of Relations (Patthānuddesa Dīpanī)*, (BPS, Kandy, Sri Lanka, W.P. No. 331/333)
17. *The Manuals of Buddhism*, (Sri Satguru Publications, Delhi, 1997)
18. *The Requisites of Enlightenment (Bodhipakkhiya Dīpanī)*, (BPS, Kandy, Sri Lanka, W.P. No. 171/174)

### References:

1. *A Manual of Mindfulness of Breathing (Ānāpāna Dīpanī)*, (BPS, Kandy, Sri Lanka, W.P. No. 431/432)
2. *The Manuals of Buddhism*, (Sri Satguru Publications, Delhi, 1997)
3. Pariyatti:  
<http://www.pariyatti.org/Resources/Treasures/VenLediSayadaw/tabid/205/Default.aspx>
4. Vipassana Research Institute, Igatpuri, India:  
<http://www.vridhamma.org/Teachers-2>
5. Wikipedia: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ledi\\_Sayadaw](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ledi_Sayadaw)

**Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw**

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The Venerable Sobhana Mahāthera, famously known as Mahāsi Sayādaw, was one of the most eminent meditation masters of modern times and a prominent figure in the contemporary resurgence of Vipassana meditation in Myanmar. Instead of concentrating on in-and-out breathing, he teaches concentrating on the rising and falling of abdomen, a fundamental shift.

Born on 29<sup>th</sup> July 1904 at Seikkhun village about seven miles from the district town of Shwebo in Upper Myanmar, he at the age of 6 began his studies at a monastic school in his village. Soon he was ordained as a novice (*sāmaṇera*) at the age of twelve, receiving the name 'Sobhana'. And at the age of twenty, he was given higher ordination (*upasampadā*) in his village monastery.

In the fourth year of his Bhikkhu Ordination, he proceeded to Mandalay, noted for its pre-eminence in Buddhist studies, where he continued his further studies under various monks of high scholastic fame. He passed the Government Pāli Examinations in the following three successive years in all the three classes (lower, middle and higher). After completing his studies, he went to Moulmein where he taught the Buddhist scriptures at a monastery known as 'Taung-wain-galay Taik Kyaung'.

Having taught and stayed in Moulmein for four years, in 1931, he left Moulmein taking bare requisites of a monk with him for Thaton, seeking to enhance the theoretical and practical aspects of meditational practices. At Thaton, he met the well-known

## Short Biographies of Influential Figures in Theravada Buddhism in 19-20<sup>th</sup> Centuries

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meditation instructor, the Venerable U Nārada, also known as Mingun Jetawun Sayādaw, who taught him the insight meditation practices. Besides him there were many other monks who practised insight meditation from Mingun Jetawun Sayādaw. Those monks afterwards would spread the insight meditation to different parts of Myanmar, applying their own techniques.

After studying for many years in Thaton, he was urgently asked to return back to Moulmein where the aged Sayādaw was seriously sick, and was not long ago passed away. But there too he could not stay long as in 1941 during the Second World War the Japanese invaded Burma, and his monastery which was adjacent to airstrip was asked to evacuate immediately, so he returned back to his native village. It was in fact a welcome opportunity for him who always wanted to go back to his village and to devote whole-heartedly to his own in practicing vipassana meditation and at the same time to teach others.

Back in his home village, he took residence at a monastery known as Mahāsi Kyaung, which is a Burmese word for a 'very big drum' because of an unusually large size of a drum that was housed there. It is from that monastery that the Sayādaw's popular name, Mahāsi Sayādaw is derived.

It was during this period, in 1945, that the Sayādaw wrote his great work, *Manual of Vipassana Meditation*, a comprehensive and authoritative treatise expounding both the doctrinal and the practical aspects of the Satipaṭṭhāna method of meditation. This work of two volumes was written by him in just seven months. So far, only one chapter of this work, the fifth, has been

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translated into English and is published under the title '*Practical Insight Meditation: Basic and Progressive Stages*'.

Very soon his reputation as an able teacher of insight meditation spread far and wide and had attracted attention from many prominent personalities. In 1949, the then prime Minister of Burma, U Nu, invited the Sayādaw to come to Rangoon to teach meditation. He accepted the invitation and took up residence at the newly established meditation centre, known as Sāsana Yeiktha Meditation Centre. The Sayādaw continued to live and conduct Vipassana meditation courses in that centre until his death in 1982. Basing from that Centre he trained hundreds of monks and laymen in insight meditation and many branches of his meditation centre have been spread out and established in Myanmar and abroad.

Besides Burmese meditators, many Westerners too were attracted towards his meditation technique. Having practised under him they established themselves as prominent meditation teachers in their respective countries. The famous Insight Meditation Society (IMS) in Barre, Massachusetts, United States is one such retreat centre which he helped in founding when he was there in 1979.

During the Sixth Buddhist Council (*Chattha Sangāyanā*) held in Rangoon from 1954 to 1956, to coincide with the two thousand and five hundred years after the parinibbāna of the Buddha, he acted as the duties of Questioner (*pucchaka*), a central role in clarifying and preserving the Buddhist teachings. He was one of the Final Editors of the canonical texts, which were recited and

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thereby approved in the sessions of the respective canonical texts that were to be recited.

In recognition of his many scholastic works and to spread insight meditation within and outside the country, he was conferred the title of '*Aggamahāpaṇḍita*' by the Myanmar government in 1957.

He passed away on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1982, after sudden and fatal heart attack.

### *Some of his notable works:*

1. *A Discourse on Lokadhamma*, tr. U On Pe (Tet Toe), (second edition, 2000)
2. *A Discourse on Sammā Paribbājaniya Sutta*, tr. U On Pe (Tet Toe) (second edition, 1997)
3. *A Discourse on Ariyavāsa*, tr. U Aye Maung, (second edition, 1992)
4. *Ovadakatha*, tr. U Sunanda (1995)
5. *Practical Insight Meditation: Basic and Progressive stages*, tr. U Pe Thin and Myanaung U Tin (1971)
6. *Practical Vipassana Meditational Exercises* (1978)
7. *Progress of Insight: A Treatise on Satipatthana Meditation*, Translated from Pali with Notes by Nyanaponika Thera, (third edition 1994)
8. *Purpose of Practising Kammatṭhāna Meditation*, tr. U Min Swe (Min Kyaw Thu) (1995)
9. *The Satipatṭhāna Vipassanā Meditation: A Basic Buddhist Mindfulness Exercise* (second edition 1992)

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10. *The Wheel of Dhamma (Dhammacakappavattana Sutta)*,  
(reprinted 2000)
11. *To Nibbāna via the Noble Eightfold Path*, tr. U Htin Fatt  
(Maung Htin) (1980)
12. *Vipassanā: Spiritual Insight*, tr. Dr. Ko Gyi (1994)

**References:**

1. *Mahasi Abroad* (2000)
2. America Burma Buddhist Association, Brooklyn, USA:  
<http://www.mahasiusa.org/sayadaw.html>
3. Mahāsī Sāsana Yeiktha, Yangon, Myanmar:  
<http://www.mahasi.org.mm/>
4. Insight Meditation Online:  
<http://www.buddhanet.net/mahabio.htm>
5. Myanmar Net:  
<http://www.myanmarnet.co.uk/dhamma/mahasi/mahasi.htm>
6. Wikipedia: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahasi\\_Sayadaw](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahasi_Sayadaw)

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### Venerable Mingun Sayādaw

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Guinness Book of Records holder for human memory, Mingun Sayādaw was also first-ever to be honoured by the Burmese government with the title of '*Tipiṭakadhara*' (the bearer of three piṭakas) for his exceptional memory power of reciting the whole canonical texts from his memory.

Mingun Sayādaw was born on 1<sup>st</sup> November, 1911 as a second child of U Hson and Daw Hsin in Kyeebin Village, of Myingyan town in Central Myanmar. His grandfather, who was a medical practitioner and astrologer, and his first teacher on Buddhist chanting, selected Maung Yan Shin as his name, but was rather affectionately called Maung Khin by his family and friends.

When Maung Khin reached the age of 7, his parents sent him to Min-kyaung Monastery, in Myingyan, where the young boy studied under Sayādaw U Sobhita. At the age of 10, he was given ordination (*sāmaṇera*) under the same Sayādaw, and was given a Dhamma name as Vicittasāra. He had studied there for ten years, until he left for Dhammānanda Monastery in Mingun, Sagaing. It was in that monastery that U Vicittasāra, under the guidance of Sayādaw U Paññācakka, studied the whole Tipiṭaka texts with its commentaries and sub-commentaries.

In 1930, Daw Dhammacārī, a learned nun of Mingun and Sir U Thwin, a wealthy philanthropist of Rangoon sponsored his higher ordination (*upasampadā*) in the same monastery of Mingun under Sayādaw U Paññācakka. Since then Daw

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Dhammacārī became his spiritual mother and Sir U Thwin his fatherly supporter for the rest of his religious life. In 1937, when his preceptor, Sayādaw U Paññācakka passed away, U Vicittasāra was asked to take charge of the monastery. From that time till his death in 1992, he continued to stay in that monastery, and drew the name Mingun Sayādaw, from the place where he lived.

Mingun Sayādaw had a gifted memory and since his novicehood, he passed all the examinations with top marks. In 1933, he was conferred the title of *Pahtamakyaw*, and in 1934, the Mahā Saṅghasāmaggi Association, which conducted the religious examinations conferred the suffix *Abhivaṃsa* to his name, and since then he was known as *Bhadanta U Vicittasārabhivaṃsa*. The same year he passed the Dhammācariya Examination held by Pariyatti Sāsanahita Association of Mandalay. The examination is believed to be one of the toughest, which normally takes three years to pass, but Mingun Sayādaw cleared it in a year.

But the coveted prize, which made him famous, came in 1953 when he passed the Tipiṭakadhara Examination which he was trying to clear since 1950. It earned him the title of '*Tipiṭakadhara Dhammabhaṇḍāgārika*', and thus became first-ever monk to do so after its introduction. It is one of the toughest and most challenging examinations, as one has to memorise whole tipiṭaka and recite it entirely by heart. In addition, one has to pass written examination on tipiṭaka texts and its commentaries. It was due to this that Guinness Book of Records recorded in 1985 that Sayādaw has a rare eidetic

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memory who recited 16,000 pages of Buddhist canonical texts in 1954.

When the Sixth Buddhist Council was held in Rangoon from 1954-56, he alongside Mahāsi Sayādaw played key role in Sangha Executive Committee. Mahāsi Sayādaw who acted as questioner (*pucchaka*) in the deliberation, Mingun Sayādaw was the respondent (*visajjaka*) on all three portions of the canon. He was later assigned the task of editing the final approved version of the canonical texts.

After the Council, at the request of U Nu, the then Prime Minister of Burma, Sayādaw began work on a treatise on the life of the Buddha, titled Mahā Buddhavaṃsa, resulted in 6 volumes and 8 books, commencing from 1955 to 1960. This book is considered a masterpiece in Sayādaw's literary work.

In 1979, under the rule of General Ne Win, the government conferred the title of '*Aggamahāpaṇḍita*'. The next year, in order to rein different Buddhist sects, the government formed the State Saṅgha Mahā Nāyaka Committee in which Sayādaw was elected as Chief Advisor of the Committee. The Committee acts as the Supreme Authority on Buddhist religious affairs of the country. It is also responsible for growth and development of Buddhasāna.

The Committee, in its first meeting, took a resolution to introduce Pariyatti Education Scheme in Myanmar, which laid the foundation for the establishment of Pariyatti Sāsana University. Mingun Sayādaw, who has vast experiences in literary fields and was well-connected with people of means,

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solicits donations from different quarters to build required infrastructures to open the university. It was due to his sustained effort that in June 1986, the first Pariyatti Sāsana University was opened in Rangoon and in August it opened in Mandalay.

In honour of his deep and extensive learning, faultless moral conduct, and immense contribution in the field of education and propagation of Sāsana, the government in 1984 conferred the highest degree of the country, the ‘*Abhidhajamahāraṭṭhaguru*’.

He passed away on 9<sup>th</sup> February, 1993, at the age of 81.

### *Some of his notable works:*

1. *The Great Chronicles of Buddhas, Vol 1, Part 1*
2. *The Great Chronicles of Buddhas, Vol 1, Part 2*
3. *The Great Chronicles of Buddhas, Vol 2, Part 1*
4. *The Great Chronicles of Buddhas, Vol 3*
5. *The Great Chronicles of Buddhas, Vol 4*
6. *The Great Chronicles of Buddhas, Vol 5*
7. *The Great Chronicles of Buddhas, Vol 6, Part 1*
8. *The Great Chronicles of Buddhas, Vol 6, Part 2*

### *References:*

1. *In Honour of Mingun Sayadaw’s 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday* (Tipitaka Nikaya Ministrative Organization, 1990):  
<http://dhammadownload.com/File-Library/MinGunSayadawGyi/MinGunSayadawGyi-80thBIRTHD.pdf>
2. Wikipedia: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mingun\\_Sayadaw](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mingun_Sayadaw)

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3. <http://www.tbsa.org/articles/MingunSayadaw.html>
4. <http://www.myanmarnet.co.uk/dhamma/mingun/mingun-all.htm>

### Venerable Mogok Sayādaw

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Venerable U Vimala, better known as ‘Mogok Sayādaw’, was one of the renowned meditation masters who contributed to the legacy of Vipassana meditation in 20<sup>th</sup> century Burma. His meditation technique involves looking at things as they arise and pass away (*anicca*), which is an extension of the theory of Dependent Arising (*paticcasamuppāda*).

He was born Maung Hla Bow on 27<sup>th</sup> December 1899 to U Aung Tun and Daw Shwe Eik, in U Yin Daw Village near Amarapura, in Mandalay. He was sent to the village monastery and at the age of 9 received ordination (*sāmaṇera*) under the preceptor-ship of Sayādaw U Jagara.

He had his early monastic education in his village monastery. A sharp and smart student he was that whatever teachers taught him once he quickly retained it in his memory. He was, therefore, loved by his teachers and devotees of that village, and whenever he went out for alms-begging he received more alms than anyone. For that reason, he was nicknamed as ‘modern Sivali’.

One day when the young novice was drying his robe in open air, it is said that a swarm of bees flew and settled on his robe. It was an unusual incident for bees to come and perch on robes. Hearing this, Sayādaw U Jagara predicted it to be a very good omen and said that the novice Vimala would one day leave his mark in the world.

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After a few years, Novice Vimala decided to go to Amarapura, near Mandalay for Abhidhamma studies. His old teacher, Sayādaw U Jagara, was not able to fulfill the aspiration of the young and energetic student, who was eager to acquire more knowledge on Abhidhamma. In Amarapura, he stayed at Miṅgala Makuna Monastery under Sayādaw U Sujāta. Novice Vimala devoted himself in studying Abhidhamma from various teachers, including Sayāgyi U Ohn, an expert on Abhidhamma.

In 1921, U Win and Daw Daw Saw, traders from Amarapura, sponsored his higher ordination (*upasampadā*) held at the same monastery under the preceptor-ship of Sayādaw U Jagara. Two years after his first higher ordination, he was given a higher re-ordination for the second time, with the sponsorship of a nun from Mogok which was later supported by all the people of Mogok. Mogok, in the northern Shan State of Burma, is famous for mining gems and rubies. Since then, out of respect to the people of Mogok, he would go there to preach. From that time on, the term Mogok was tagged with his name, and was famously known as Mogok Sayādaw, the Venerable of Mogok.

In 1924, Mogok Sayādaw became the abbot of Pitaka Kyaung, a temple within the Miṅgala Makuna Monastery. And, for the next thirty years he would be teaching Abhidhamma from that temple.

Meanwhile, Mogok Sayādaw's reputation as a terrific preacher on dhamma and on Abhidhamma spread everywhere. In fact, he had taken over the place of his Abhidhamma teacher Sayāgyi U Ohn, from who he had earlier learned. His students came from far and wide, renunciates and layperson alike. During day-time

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he used to teach to the lay community and in the evening to the monastic community. He always taught to his students without referring to any book, as he had fully memorized the entire Abhidhamma by heart. Sayādaw could detect even a minor mistake made by his students and correct it immediately. His teaching methods had become so popular among the people that during his Dhamma talks the monastery is invariably fully packed with people from near and afar, and they jostled for spaces and occupied whatever empty spaces available.

When Sayādaw U Nāgavaṃsa heard that besides teaching Abhidhamma texts Mogok Sayādaw was preaching too, he admonished him, thus: *'accomplish your work first – then you can continue your preaching'*. These words of advice had made huge impact to his mind. From that day onward, he directed himself whole-heartedly in meditation. Soon he realized that he was like a cowherd who has no opportunity to use the milk given by cow even after tending the animals for years.

From Amarapura, he regularly visited Mandalay and Monywa, where he met and learned from eminent meditation of that time. It was in Monywa, at the famous monastery of Ledi Sayadāw that he stayed for few years and thereafter established himself in meditation practices. As a matter of fact, he continued the legacy of Ledi Sayadāw's meditation techniques with his few additional inputs, like emphasizing more on Dependent Arising.

He is considered an Enlightened Being in Myanmar, and many supernatural incidents were associated with him. The government conferred on him *Aggamahāpaṇḍita*, 3 months before his death.

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He passed away on 17<sup>th</sup> October, 1962, in Mogok.

### *Some of his notable works:*

1. *Cittanupassana and Vedanupassana*, tr. U Than Daing  
(<http://www.dhammadownload.com/MogokSayadaw-eBookInEnglish.htm>)
2. *The Cyclic Teaching of Venerable U Wimala*  
(<http://www.dhammadownload.com/MogokSayadaw-eBookInEnglish.htm>)
3. *The Doctrine of Paticcasamuppada: The Law of Independent Origination*, tr. U Than Daing  
(<http://www.dhammadownload.com/MogokSayadaw-eBookInEnglish.htm>)
4. *How to Die with a Smile*, tr. U Sway Tin (A translation by Ehi Passiko)  
(<http://www.dhammadownload.com/MogokSayadaw-eBookInEnglish.htm>)
5. *The Four Noble Truths delivered by Mogok Sayadaw*  
(<http://www.dhammadownload.com/MogokSayadaw-eBookInEnglish.htm>)

### *References:*

1. *The Mogok Sayadaw*: U Sway Tin (A translation by Ehi Passiko, 2000)
2. Wikipedia:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mogok\\_Sayadaw\\_%28Venerable\\_Sayadawgyi\\_U\\_Wimala%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mogok_Sayadaw_%28Venerable_Sayadawgyi_U_Wimala%29)

## Venerable Paññābhoga of Murng Su

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The founder-chairman (*saṅghanāyaka*) of the *Shan State Saṅgha Council*, Venerable Paññābhoga was one of the chief architects of Tai/Shan<sup>1</sup> Tipitaka. In 1956, the *Tai Pitaka Translation Committee* was formed by a group of eminent Tai monks of the Shan State of Myanmar, whose mission was to translate Pāli Tipitaka into Tai language. The translation was necessitated to make it accessible for the Tai people who otherwise did not have direct access to the original source.

He was born in 1892 in Par-Kea Village near Murng Su Township in the Southern Shan State of Myanmar. His parents were Lung Yort and Pa Nang Kham. He was the second child of the six children of his parents. His birth name was Sai Parn Zing.

In 1909, he was initiated into novice-hood (*sāmaṇera*) under the abbot of Par-Kea Monastery, which was sponsored by Pu Murng Su of Murng Khamg Village near Murng Su Township. He was given the monastic name, Paññābhoga. In 1913, he received his higher ordination (*upasampadā*) under the abbot of Kyawn Partep, Kesi Township, and with the support of the family of Puloi Marn Seng and Nailoi Marn Seng.

Saosra<sup>2</sup> Paññābhoga started his monastic education at Par-Kea Monastery, Murng Su, where he was ordained as a novice. After

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<sup>1</sup> Shan is a corruption of Siam by the Burmese. Shan people in Myanmar call themselves "Tai" in their own language.

<sup>2</sup> An honorific title in Tai for a respectable teacher, master, etc. (Tai) Saosra = Venerable Sir (English).

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that, he moved to several places in Shan State for his monastic education, such as Kyaung Wan Yok, Kesi Township, Kyaung Yord and Kyaung Wan Khar, Kyaukme Township.

Later, he moved to Yameatheen and Visuddhārāma Monasteries, the main centre of Shwegyin-nikāya in Mandalay, Kyaitkasam Monastery in Yangon, and Pubbārāma Monastery in Pegu Township.

In 1929, he had his first overseas Dhamma journey to India as a pilgrim. From India he proceeded to Sri Lanka to enhance his knowledge on Dhamma and studied Buddhism as well as allied subjects, such as Pāli, Sanskrit, and English. He remained in Sri Lanka till 1933, and he thus can be considered as the first among the Tai monk who studied abroad.

In 1958, he was the first translator of Tipitaka from Pāli into Tai. He was also the founder-abbot of Pitaka Monastery in Panglong, from where he kept on translating Tipitaka from Pāli into Tai. The translation work completed in 1960.

Saosra Paññābhoga also started to set-up of several monastic institutions, and the *Pariyatti Saddhammapāla Examination* of the Shan State in Tai medium was started under his guidance at Panglong. Pitaka Monastic Institution, which he had founded, has since been the heart of promoting the study (*pariyatti*) and the practice (*patipatti*) of Theravada Buddhism among the Tai speaking people in the Union of Myanmar. He had helped in reviving the ancient learning system of Tai people, and reinvigorated the self-esteem of the whole Tai people by translating the entire Tipitaka into their own native tongue.

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A scholar monk, Saosra Paññābhoga was highly regarded by the people as a strict follower of Vinaya. After all, he has been trained in many Shwekyin-nikāya monasteries where the vinaya practices were strict.

He was honoured with numerous prizes and titles by prominent personality and institutions. In 1926, he was conferred the religious title '*Gaṇavācaka Dhammarājaguru*' by the prince of Hsipaw, Sao Khun Kheo. In 1934, The '*Shwegyin Nikāya Mahānāyaka Rājaguru*' was conferred to him by the prince of Murngsu.

In 1957, the president of the Union of Myanmar, Dr. Pa Oo conferred him the title of '*Chaṭṭhasaṅgīti Ovāda Saṅghanāyaka*'. To honour his unique service to the Buddhasāsanā, in 1958, the title of the *Pathama Mahānāyaka* of the *Shan State Saṅgha Council* was conferred by the Saṅgha of Shan State Council.

He passed away on 18<sup>th</sup> October 1971, after long illness in Myaratanar Hospital in Yangon. His remains were brought back to Panglong and his cremation rite was attended by a large number of people. His ashes were then enshrined in a Stupa near the Pitaka Monastery of Panglong, Southern Shan State, Union of Myanmar to symbolize the national religious figure he had come to personify.

***Some of his notable works:***

1. *The Pālīpakuna*
2. *The Bhikkhu Pātimokkha Tai Translation*
3. *The Kaccāyana Pāli Grammar Tai Translation*

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4. *The Abhidhammaṭṭhasaṅgaha Tai Translation*
5. *Khuddasikkhā Tai Translation*
6. *Mūlasikkhā Tai Translation*
7. *Kambhojahitarāsi*

### ***References:***

1. *Some Prominent Pioneers of Tai Buddhist Scripture: Tai Sangha Studying in Sri Lanka (2008)*
2. *Mai Taung Pi Kwon Kham Pariyattisaddhammapala keansao (Golden Jubilee of Pariyattisaddhammapala Examination, 2008)*

**Venerable Pandita of Murng Nong**

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Venerable Pandita was a well-known meditation master in the Mingun Sayadaw's Satipaṭṭhāna vipassana tradition, a popular preacher and educationalist who together with other senior monks of his time initiated the translation project of the Pāli Tipitaka into Tai/Shan (his native language) in the late 1950s, just after the Sixth Buddhist Council in which he participated. Not only was he well-versed in Pāli and Burmese literatures, but a scholar par excellence of Tai literatures too, who has composed a large number of Tai poetical literatures (known as *laṅkā Tai*).

Venerable Pandita was born as Sai Phone on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1912 to Mr. Loong Mawk Kham and Mrs. Pa Nang Sengsa of Murng Lurn of the Northern Shan State of Union of Myanmar. The seventh of the eight siblings, when he was still a young boy he and his siblings followed their parents who resettled in Wanwa Village of Kesi Town, Shan State.

At the age of 12, he was sent to the Wanwa monastery, where he learnt and memorized the Tai script, Parittas, Suttas, and training rules of a novice (*sekhiyā*). At the monastery, he also learnt Tai poetic writing skills, special subject mastered only by a few. In 1927, he was ordained (*sāmaṇera*) under the preceptor-ship of Ven. Saosra Nanda, the abbot of the monastery. Having stayed there for 6 years, he went to Vaso monastery in Murngnong and continued his studies under Ven. Saosra Dinnakammajeya. In 1932, he was given higher ordination (*upasampadā*) in the same monastery under Ven. Saosra Paññā of Mark Lamg monastery of Murng Nong.

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After his higher ordination, Ven. Pandita moved and stayed in various monasteries in the Shan State for further studies. In 1937, while he was in Murngkut, the Prince of Murng Nong by the name Saopha Khun Sa and the people of Murng Nong requested him to return to Murng Nong to become the abbot of the Vaso monastery. Since that time he is to be known as *Saosra Murngnong*, the Venerable of Murng Nong.

In 1943, Saopha Kham Serk, better known as Sao Shwe Thaik of Yawnghwe (later the first president of Myanmar) invited three monks from every region of Shan State to study the entire Vinaya Pitaka at the Yangon Monastery in Yawnghwe. After the end of the first rains retreat there, the sangha founded the *United Sangha Association of Shan State Hills* and Saosra Pandita of Murng Nong was selected as the Vice-President of the association.

In 1955, when association met again at Murng Nong, Saosra Murng Nong emphasized the need for translating the *Tipitaka* into the Tai language so that it would be easily accessible to Tai people. After the meeting, he travelled extensively to every town and village of Shan State to raise awareness and garner support for the project. He had received an overwhelming support from all the sections of people – the Sangha, Princes and Tai people.

In 1956, he went to Murng Su to meet a highly learned senior monk by the name of Venerable Saosra Paññābhoga and to attend a meeting to select members for the project. In the meeting, the Sangha proposed Ven. Saosra Paññābhoga to be the chairman of newly formed *Tai Pitaka Translation*

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*Committee*, to translate the entire *Tipiṭaka* into Tai. In translating the *Piṭaka* into Tai, Saosra Murng Nong took responsibility to translate the *Pārājikākanda Pāli* of the *Vinaya-Piṭaka*, the *Mahāvagga Pāli* of the *Dīgha-nikāya*, and the first volume of *Paṭṭhāna* text of the *Abhidhamma-Piṭaka*.

In 1957, another meeting was held at Loilem by the sangha, princes from different ruling houses of the Shan State, and the people, to form the *Shan State Sangha Council*. In that meeting, Ven. Saosra Paññābhoga was again selected as the Chairman (*Saṅghamahānāyaka*) of the Council, Ven. Saosra Vicintā of Langkhur as the first Vice-Chairman, and Ven. Saosra Murng Nong as the second Vice-Chairman. The following year, the first annual meeting of *Shan State Sangha Council* was held at Wat Pitakat of Panglong, where it was decided that the *Tipiṭaka* education and examination of the sangha should be imparted in the Tai language. Consequently, the council started the *Pariyatti Saddhammapāla Examinations* in Panglong, which have since become an annual feature. It was, in fact, Saosra Murng Nong who proposed the council to prepare a set of syllabus following the newly formed educational system, lest their translation works would be in vain.

To spread the Buddha's Dhamma, Saosra Murng Nong established many monastic institutions where he trained young novices in Pāli, Tai languages, and Buddhist studies.

Not only was he active in teaching and studies of Buddhism, but also in practicing meditation. He was attracted to the technique of *Sathon Mula Mingun*, a famous meditation tradition in the Shan State, and has written many books on meditation. The

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biggest centre of it is located at Langkhur, named *Sathon Mula Mingun Meditation Centre*. Later Saosra Murng Nong himself became an established meditation master and helped open new centres and monasteries in several regions of the Shan State.

In 1979, Saosra Murng Nong was invited by the Burmese government to participate in the *State Saṅgha Mahānāyaka* meeting, with objectives to bring in an efficient ecclesiastical administration for the large number of monks in Myanmar under single umbrella. In 1984, when the *State Saṅgha Mahānāyaka* Committee he became a member of this highest executive body.

In 1985, in recognition of his contribution to the Buddhasāsana, the Myanmar government conferred on him the title of 'Aggamahāpaṇḍita'.

He passed away on 10<sup>th</sup> January 1990, at the age of 78.

### *Some of his notable works:*

1. *Lokaniti* (Pāli, Burmese and Tai, 1948)
2. *Loki-sippam Kamboja* (1951)
3. *Kyarm Buddhavandanā* (1958)
4. *Khandhāyatanadhātu Vipassanā* (1958)
5. *The Dhammosadha Dhamma-talk Vol.I* (1960)
6. *The Dhammosadha Dhamma-talk Vol.II* (no date)
7. *Pātimokkha tharm-top* (1961)
8. *Laṅkā Pert Ok Per Jai* (Printed in 2008) (poetic work)
9. *Parit lounng Pali Fae Tai* (1962) (Paritta translation)
10. *Aung Paet Purng, Surk Pern Jao Sivali and Upagutta, Lankar Loung* (1968) (poetic work)
11. *Gambhiratthapakāsani* (1975)

12. *Vipassanā Pong Leng Sa* (1981)
13. *Nibbāna Sab Laeng* (1981)
14. *Vipassanā Hai Hat Kvā Waiwai* (1982)
15. *Mula Moonlee* (1982)
16. *Bhāra-suttan Dham Jao* (1982)
17. *Dham Jao Paticcasamupād* (1983)
18. *Satipatthana Sankhepakyard*
19. *Mahāsatiṭṭhāna kyarm*
20. *Anatta-lakkhana-sut*
21. *Vipassana Gnan Jaen Loung*
22. *Sāsana Arnwajarmt* (1985)
23. *Jātibhavasamvega*
24. *Pakinnakovāda Lankar Luong* (poetic work)

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3. *Some Prominent Pioneers of Tai Buddhist Scripture: Tai Sangha Studying in Sri Lanka* (2008)
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## Venerable Ājeyya of Dhammodaya

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The founder and the abbot of Dhammodaya Teaching Monastery, the Venerable Ājeyya is better known as Saosra Dhammodaya. He is one of the well-known modern Tai educationists from Kengtung in the Eastern Shan State of the Union of Myanmar. He founded the Dhammodaya Monastic Examination in Kengtung, where medium of instructions and examinations is conducted in Tai medium.

Saosra Dhammodaya was born in 1927 to the family of Lung Sarng Su and Par Nang Woe, in Sum Tam Quarter, Warn Par Marn See Pog, Kengtung Township, Eastern Shan State. His parents had four children and he is the youngest of them. His birth name was Sai Gam.

In 1937, at the age of ten, he was initiated into novice-hood (*sāmaṇera*) under the preceptor-ship of Ven. Saosra Rajinda of Aungmangalar Monastery, which was sponsored by the family of Lung Tee and Par Tee. He was given the monastic name, Ājeyya. After his ordination, he moved to stay at Murng Nai Monastery. While he was there, the abbot of the monastery passed away, and the devotees of the monastery had great difficulty in finding a suitable monk who would take over the charge of the monastery. As a result, they invited Ven. Ājeyya, who was then just a novice, to become the head of the monastery.

In 1947, he received higher ordination (*upasampadā*) under the preceptor of Ven. Saosra Indācakka, which was again sponsored by his earlier devotees the family of Lung Tee and Par Tee.

Regrettably, when he was young, Saosra Ājeyya did not get a chance to study, whether in his home or in monasteries, despite his having strong urge to study. Once he asked his parents, his desire to study but they were against it, for the reason best known to them. He continued to look after the monastery, as a chief monk, even after becoming a bhikkhu for two years, without any formal education. It was only in 1950 that he finally made up his mind to move to another place to study.

He went to study at the Kamgyi Monastery in Yawnghwe, Southern Shan State of Myanmar. The monastery, at that time, was headed by the Ven. Vimalabhivamsa, a well-known teacher, which provided a high-quality vinaya training and monastic education. He stayed and learned there for seven years. During the seven years of his staying he sat for all the exams held by the Vinayādinuggaha Examination board of Shan State and the Religious Affairs of the Government of Union of Myanmar and passed all the grades. For his excellent record, he was conferred the degree of *Sāsanadhaja-sirīpavara Dhammācāriya*.

After completing his studies in 1956, his devotees came and requested him to return back to his former monastery, and among the Tai people. The year 1956 happened to be the year of 2500<sup>th</sup> year of Buddha Jayanti. He had a strong urge to contribute something good to mark the 2500<sup>th</sup> year of Buddha Jayanti

After returning back to his hometown, Kengtung, he turned his former monasteries, Mung Nai Monastery and Aungmangalar Monastery, into a monastic teaching monastery, and he renamed

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it as Dhammodaya Teaching Monastery. The opening ceremony was held on 4<sup>th</sup> November, 1975. It is notable that the prince of Yawnghwe, Sao Shwe Thike, the First President of the Union of Myanmar, himself attended the opening ceremony.

Saosra Dhammodaya also founded an examination board named Dhammodaya Examination. It is remarkable that he himself had set the curricula for the examination, and not following the other existing examination boards, such as those of the Pathamapyan Examination held by the government and the Pariyatti-saddhammapāla in Panglong.

Moreover, to run his work smoothly he has organized several Buddhist Associations such as Dhammodayakārī Association, Upāsakā Association, Visākhā Association, and Dhammacakka Association. He has also started two branches of monasteries – the Dhammika-Pubbārāma Monastery in Kengtung and the Mahā Myatmuni (Makkar Hoekham) Monastery in Tachilaik Township in the Eastern Shan State.

Saosra Dhammodaya is not only a teacher in his monasteries, but also a renowned dhamma preacher. He has given more than 600 dhamma talks, and during his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary over 1000 audiotapes of his dhamma talks were donated to all over the Shan community.

Being noted and appreciated for his unique contribution to the perpetuation of Buddha-sasana, he has been selected for highest positions and conferred with various titles and honours. In 1973 and 1978, he was elected to be the *Saṅghasamagga Mahānāyaka* of the Eastern Shan State. In 1989, he was elected

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as a member of *Saṅghanāyaka* in Shan State. In 1991, the government of Union of Myanmar conferred him the title of ‘*Aggamahāpaṇḍita*’, and in 2007 government conferred him with the highest title of ‘*Aggamahāsaddhama-jotikadhaja*’.

He is now in his 87 and still the abbot of Dhammodaya Monastery which he has set up.

***References:***

1. *Some Prominent Pioneers of Tai Buddhist Scripture: Tai/Shan Sangha Studying in Sri Lanka*, (April 2008)
2. *Surk Pern Srarsao Bhaddanta Ajeyya [A Short Biography of Venerable Ajeyya]*: Sai Toon Hla, (Wong Wan Offset, Taunggyi, 1993)
3. *Fern Mai Taung Pi Kwon Kham Turk Saun Lik Dhammodaya Weng Kengtung [Magazine Marking the Golden Jubilee of Dhammodaya Teaching Monastery in Kengtung]*: (2008)

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### Amat Loung<sup>3</sup>

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Amat Loung of Murng Nong (Chief Minister of Murng Nong) was one of the best known six great Tai poets; he lived between 1854 and 1905 CE. He composed more than forty works on long Tai narrative poetic writings, or the classical rhyming Tai literature, mostly on Buddhism.

He was born in 1854 in Zong Yao village, under Murng Nong, one of the many principalities of the Shan State at that time, situated in central Shan State of Myanmar.

Amat Loung started his primary education at Shwe-Pook-Taw Monastery, Wan Zing village in Murng Nong State, where he was ordained as a novice and had a monastic name 'Sobhinna'. He later moved to Murng Nim Monastery in Kesi Township, where he received his higher education. There, he studied variety of subjects, such as Shan poetry and literature, metrics and Pāli grammar under famous teacher Ven. Saosra Neminda, the abbot of Murng Nim Monastery. He gained much of his writing skills on diverse subjects under this great venerable.

Having completed his advanced studies, Sobhinna, at eighteen, disrobed; a few years later, Khun Tun, the Prince of Murng Nong invited him to the town to work on writing religious treatises and other subjects. His first literary work was a classical poem on the *Mahosadhā Jātaka Volume III* as requested by Khun Tun. He went on to produce several books for the prince.

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<sup>3</sup> Contributed by Jotika Khur-Yearn (SOAS, University of London)

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Amat Loung was a great scholar who travelled extensively to research for his work enriching his writing. It is believed that many of his writings were composed while travelling. For example, the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhān*, his famous work on the Shan version of the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, was written in 1875 during his trip to Laikha, another town in central Shan State.

In 1897, Sobhinna along with his pupils set out their journey to the north and stopped over at Murng Kueng (Mongkung). Khun Mung, the Prince of Murng Kueng, was very pleased to learn of his arrival in the town, and appointed him as Amat Loung, chief minister, also adding the name of his hometown 'Murng Nong' to his honorary name, which is a tradition in Tai communities that the name of one's hometown being used as the last name of respected people.

In 1904, after he had served as chief minister of Murng Kueng for four years, he received a letter of invitation from Khun Sang Ton Hoong, the ruling Prince of Senwi, a principedom in the northern Shan State. Whilst at Senwi, Amat Loung's dream of a printing press, with which he could publish books with beautiful typeface at great speed; that dream was soon to be materialized. He helped the prince buy and set up the first printing machine in the Shan States.

However, it is tragic that a great Shan scholar like him did not live very long. He died, probably of cancer, at the age of only fifty-one, on Saturday 16th September 1905.

Over fifty years after the death of Amat Loung, Loong Khun Mahā, author of *Puenkhu maw liktai 6 zao* [History of Six Tai scholars] undertook an extensive research on the works of Amat

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Loung and published the list of his works in 1970. According to Khun Mahā, there are over forty Shan poetic works composed by Amat Loung. Here Khun Mahā noted that his list was by no means complete and hoped that others would discover more of Amat Loung's lost works.

During our fieldworks for two projects on Shan manuscripts – *Shan Buddhism at the Borderlands Projects* and *Revealing Hidden Collections Project*, we found thirty-two manuscripts of Amat Loung from two collections: (1) our cataloguing data of Shan manuscripts at four temples in northern Thailand, first collected in 2009 and then again in 2014, and (2) the list of Shan manuscripts in Lashio, northern Shan State, collected by Dr. Sai Pe in 2009. There are many other collections of Shan manuscripts both inside and outside the Shan State, which are yet to be explored.

### *Some of his notable works:*

1. *Piñ'caseṭṭhilasathe"kyī"ñā"pā* (1872)
2. *Dhammarāsī* (1872)
3. *Nip'pān'sūñ'ḷān'"sīlakhān* (1973)
4. *Sathe"hāpā* (1874)
5. *Mahāsatipathān* (1875)
6. *Paramtthamañcū* (1875)
7. *Saddhammapālamedanīkyām* (1876)
8. *Dhammapālamedanī* (1876)
9. *Mahāsaddanalauncānphūik* (1876)
10. *Jātidukkha-samvegadutiyatoi* (1877)
11. *Ūtinna* (1880)
12. *Amattadvāra-pakāsanīkyām* (1880)
13. *Phrā'alaun'kālidāsa* (1882)

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14. *Khandhāhāpā* (1887)
15. *Puritatta-jātakavatthu* (1887)
16. *Dhammapadadutiyatoi* (1888)
17. *Sabbakaṅkhāvinodanīkyām* (1890)
18. *Sakatakantha-akkhradīpanīkyām* (1891)
19. *Saddhammālaṅkāra* (1891)
20. *Desanālaṅkāra* (1891)
21. *Kassapavatthu* (1891)
22. *Namobuddhāyasuṅ 'phyāt'* (1891)
23. *Kālīdāsavatthu* (1892)
24. *Dhammapadautinnatān vatthu* (1892)
25. *Manikuṅtala vatthu dutiyatoi* (1896)
26. *Cetasik 'pèṅ'* (1898)
27. *Mahākassapavatthu* (1898)
28. *Sampindana-dīpakavatthu* (1899)
29. *Maniratanāpuṅ 'çā* (1900)
30. *Jātidukkhaakyaṅ* (1904)
31. *Rājahitadīpanī* (1904)
32. *Samvegavatthu* (1905)

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1. Amat Loung Murng Nong(1875) *Mahāsatipaṭṭhān*, a Shan version of the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, composed in Shan lik loung poetry in 1875 and published as modern book form but in the old version of Shan scripts by the Shan Pitaka Press in 1968 in Taunggyi, Shan State, Burma [An annotated translation of this work was written by Jotika Khur-Yearn as the major part of his PhD Thesis, 2012].
2. Crosby, K. and Khur-Yearn, J. (2010) 'Poetic dhamma and

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the Zare: traditional style of teaching Theravada amongst the Shan of Northern Thailand' in *Contemporary Buddhism*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 1-27.

3. Khun Mahā, Lung. (1970) *Puenkhu maw liktai 6 zao* ['History of 6 Tai scholars']. Shan State: The committee of education (Reprinted.

### Venerable Narinda

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Having born as a Pa-O, one of ethnic in Shan State, Myanmar native speaker, the most venerable Narinda Mahathera was a well-learned Sayadaw who was skilled both in Burmese and Pali languages after his mother tongue. He was the founder of Taung Kyaung Gyi monastic learning centre which is now located in Taunggyi, Shan State. He had been lecturing on Buddhist studies and contributing for Buddha Sasana throughout his life. Together with Sao Shwe Thaik, the first President of Myanmar, the Thera had also made a lot of effort for the development of Buddha Sasana in Shan State of Myanmar, formally known as Burma. In recognition of his work and contribution, venerable Narinda Mahathera was entitled "Agga-maha-pandita" by the government, the republic of the Union of Myanmar, in 1979 and the Sayadaw was chosen as a representative monk to travel to England, Germany, Swaziland, India, Sri Lanka and so forth.

The most venerable Narinda Mahathera was born in 1895, in Thein Seit City, Tan Tar Oo village, Sathon province of Burma. He was a son of U Khyun and Daw Oak and was the second child out of the five siblings. In 1914, he received higher ordination under his preceptor the most venerable Muninda of Myauk Kyaung monastery in his home town.

As a novice Samanera, he learned Pali grammar and Abhidhamma from lecturers of Kusinarama monastery in his village for 9 years. After fully got ordained and for 5 vassa (years), he proceeded his further Buddhist studies under the most venerable

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Carinda Mahathera at Sukhidarama monastery, Kyeik Kaw City of Sathon province.

In 1918, he travelled to Mandalay and continued his studies. He versed Abhidhamma and its commentaries under the guidance of Sayadaw U Jakara and U Vimala of Payagyi temple, U Adiccaramsi, known as U Kyi, of Shwe Taung temple, Sayadaw U Revada of Thu Htay monastery, and Sayagyi U Onn of Mingala Thait temple. In 1923, he studied the same subjects but as a wide and deep learning style from Sayadawgyi U Dipa, who resided at Pat Pin Ai temple, Si Mee Khung City of Myin Khyan province. Not only Abhidhamma did he learned, he also studied Vinaya and its commentaries from Sayadaw U Silacara of Magyipin monastery.

In 1921, he returned his hometown from Mandalay and lectured Pali literature while residing at Dhammakari monastery. In 1928, after a few years of lecturing at the monastery, he was requested to teach Buddhist studies at Payagyi temple, Kyait Tho city, Sathon province for one year and in 1930s he was again invited to lecture at Mahadhammikaram monastery of Khayan city, Hamsavadi region.

In 1932, under guidance and supervision of his teacher Candarama Sayadaw, he founded Pubbarama monastic learning centre in Sathon city and taught Pali studies to hundreds of students for nine years. In 1945, the most venerable was invited to Taunggyi, the capital of Shan State by devotees. There he founded Taung Kyaung Gyi monastic learning centre and shared his invaluable knowledge to many students who came to

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master their studies at the monastery. Many students had been educated and graduated under his leadership.

The most venerable Narinda Mahathera was a highly respected by both Sangha community and devotees due to his tireless effort for the propagation of the Buddha's teachings. His contributions both in Sathon of Mon State and Taunggyi of Shan State made him well known among devotees and ruling princes such as Sao Shwe Thait of Nyaung Shwe and Sao Khun Kyi of Si Seng. They work for the development of Buddha Sasana hand in hand in Shan State. In order to recognize his contributions and work, the government of the Union of Myanmar entitled "Agga-maha-pandita" an honor religious degree to him in 1979. He was also selected to represent the country and travelled to England, Germany, Swaziland, India, and Sri Lanka and so on. The most venerable passed away at the age of 90, in 1985.

**Reference:** *Pathama Taungkyaunggyitaik Thamainphyit Sin A kyin, (A Brief History of Pathama Taungkyaunggyi Institute)* 2008.

*Ashin Narinda Mathemyat Theruppatti.* Religious Affair Publication, Kaba-Aye, Yangon 1979.

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concerning the study of Pāli and the Buddha Dhamma. He wrote Pāli grammar and several textbooks. He also designed the university's curriculum. It consisted of secular subjects as well as religious studies, and the preparation of Pāli examination, as the new university also served the purpose of training monks.

While the Mahamakut Buddhist University belonged to the Dhammayuttika Order, King Chulalongkorn also strengthened the school of the Mahānikāya Order in the Wat Mahādhātu which in 1896 became the Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University. The Sangha unity was also strengthened by the decision to hold the Pāli examination in two sets: one at Mahamakut, where Vajirañāṇavarorasa's new curriculum and a written examination format would be used, and one at the Grand Palace Chapel, where the traditional oral translations would be heard.

From 1900 to 1910 the position of Supreme Patriarch of Thailand remained vacant. It is speculated that King Chulalongkorn didn't want to appoint a successor to the 9th Patriarch because a senior monk might have been too conservative to support the ongoing reforms, and Vajirañāṇavarorasa might have been still too young to be able to assert his reforms against the will of the conservative senior monks.

After the accession of the throne by King Vajiravudh in 1910, Vajirañāṇavarorasa was appointed Supreme Patriarch of Thailand. In 1921, King Vajiravudh created the honorary title *Phramahasamanachao* for the Supreme Patriarch of Thailand.

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Vajirañāṇavarorasa continued his work in religious education, Sangha administration and scholarship. He breathed new life to the Council of Elders, founded by the Sangha Act of 1902. As a classical Pāli scholar, he was elected an Honorary Member of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain.

He passed away on the 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1921.

***Some of his notable works:***

1. *Numerical Sayings of Dhamma (Dhammavibhaga) Section One* (1969)
2. *Biographies of some of the Noble Disciples* (1967)
3. *Life of the Buddha* (1950)
4. *Autobiography: The life of Prince-Patriarch Vajiranana of Siam, 1860-1921*(1979)
5. *Five Precepts and Five Ennoblers* (1963)
6. *Navakovada: Instructions for Newly-Ordained Bhikkhus and Samaneras*

***References:***

1. *Autobiography: The life of Prince-Patriarch Vajiranana of Siam, 1860-1921*: Reynolds, Craig J. (1979). Athens, Ohio: University of Ohio Press.
2. *Navakovada: Instructions for Newly-Ordained Bhikkhus and Samaneras*
3. Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vajiranavarorasa>

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### Venerable Ajahn Chah

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Venerable Ajahn Chah was an influential meditation master of Thailand and a founder of two major monasteries in the Thai Forest Tradition. Live simply, be natural, and watch the mind is the keys to his practice. He does not emphasize any special meditation techniques nor does he encourage crash courses to attain quick insights and enlightenment. In formal sitting one may watch the breath until the mind is still, and then continue practice by observing the flow of the mind-body process.

Venerable Ajahn Chah (Phra Bodhiñana Thera) was born on 17<sup>th</sup> June 1918, in to a typical farming family in Bahn Gor Village, in the province of Ubon Rachathani, in the Isan region of Northeast Thailand.

Following the local custom, he entered the monastery as a novice at the age of nine, where, during a three-year stay, he learned to read and write in some basic Buddhist teaching. After three years, he left the monastery to help his family on the farm for a number of years. At the age of twenty, he again returned to monastic life on seeking ordination as a monk (*bhikkhu*).

In the early year of his bhikkhu's life, he studied Pāli and Buddhism at leading monasteries and observed monastic disciplines in detail. A few years later, the death of his father awakened him to the transience of life and instilled in him a desire to find the real essence of the Buddha's teaching. Being inspiring on the real Dhamma, he started practicing meditation

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under the guidance of several teachers those who are following the local forest tradition.

After being trained from various teachers, he finally came to meet Venerable Ajahn Mun, the most outstanding meditation master, who followed austere forest tradition. Ajahn Chah practiced in the techniques of Ajahn Mun and spent his time in forests, caves, cremation grounds and ideal places for developing meditation practice. He wandered through the countryside living in tiger and cobra infested jungles, using reflections on death to penetrate to the true meaning of life.

After many years of wandering, Ajahn Chah returned to settle in a thick forest grove near the village of his birthplace. This grove was uninhabited, known as a place of cobras, tigers, and ghost, and the perfect location for a forest monk. His flawless approach to meditation and his simple, direct style of teaching, with the emphasis on practical application and a balanced attitude, began to attract a large following of monks and lay people.

In 1954, *Wat Nong Pah Pong* monastery was established, where Ajahn Chah could teach his simple, and practice-based form of meditation. Around Ajahn Chah a large monastery formed as more and more monks, nuns, and lay people came to hear his teaching and stay on with him.

He attracted a wide variety of disciples, which included in 1966, the first Westerner, Venerable Ajahn Sumedho. In 1975, *Wat Pah Nanachat* (International Forest Monastery) was set up with Venerable Ajahn Sumedho as the abbot. *Wat Pah Nanachat* was

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the first monastery in Thailand specifically geared towards training English-speaking Westerners in the monastic vinaya, as well as the first run by a Westerner.

Starting from Wat Nong Pah Pong as the main centre, it increased into over 250 branches includes thirty mountain throughout Thailand, as well as over 15 associated monasteries and ten lay practice centers around the world.

In 1976 Venerable Ajahn Chah was invited to England together with Ajahn Sumedho. Beginning in 1979, he was instrumental in establishing Theravada Buddhism in the West. He eventually established the first branch monastery of Wat Pa Pong outside of Thailand which is called Cittaviveka (commonly known as Chithurst Buddhist Monastery) in the United Kingdom. Since then, further branch monasteries have been established in England, Switzerland, Australia, New Zealand and Italy.

In the 1980, Venerable Ajahn Chah's health was in decline due to diabetes. He began to feel more acutely the symptoms of dizziness and memory lapse which he had been feeling for some years. This led to an operation in 1981, which, however, failed to reverse the onset of the paralysis which eventually rendered him completely bedridden and unable to speak.

Following the situation, he used his ill health as a teaching point, emphasizing that it was “a living example of the impermanence of all things and reminded people to endeavor to find a true refuge within themselves since he would not be able to teach for very much longer”. However, this did not stop the growth of monks and laypeople who came to practice at his

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monastery, for whom the teachings of Ajahn Chah are a constant guide and inspiration. The dhamma talks of Ajahn Chan have been recorded and transcribed and translated into several languages.

He passed away on 16<sup>th</sup> January 1992 at the age of 73. More than one million people, including the Thai royal family, attended Ajahn Chah's funeral for his final journey.

***References:***

1. *Food for the heart* (The collected teachings of Ajahn Chah)
2. *Modern Buddhist Masters: Jack Kornfield*
3. [www.ajahnchah.org](http://www.ajahnchah.org)
4. [www.watnongpahpong.org](http://www.watnongpahpong.org)
5. [www.watpahnachal.org](http://www.watpahnachal.org)

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### Venerable Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu

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Venerable Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu was a famous and influential ascetic-philosopher of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Known as an innovative re-interpreter of Buddhism and Thai beliefs, Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu fostered a reformation in conventional religious perceptions in Thailand, as well as abroad.

He was born Nguam Panitch on 26<sup>th</sup> May 1906 in the village of Phumriang (Chaiya District), Surat Thani Province, Thailand. His father, Sieng Panitch, was a shopkeeper of second generation of Sino-Thai (*Hokkien*) ancestry and his mother, Klaun, was a Thai. He entered monastic life in 1926. Typical of a young monk during the time, he travelled to the capital city, Bangkok, for his studies. But he found the temples there dirty, crowded, and, most troubling to him, the sangha corrupt, 'preoccupied with prestige, position, and comfort with little interest in the highest ideals of Buddhism'. As a result, he returned back to his native district and occupied a small tract of land near his village.

Thus, he established *Suan Mokkhabālārāma* (The Garden of the Power of Liberation) in 1932, near his village in Southern Thailand. It was the only Forest Dhamma Centre in the region, and one of a very few places dedicated to Vipassana. He strove for a simple, pristine practice in attempt to emulate the Buddha's core teaching, 'Do good, avoid evil, and purify the mind'. He, therefore, avoided the customary ritualism and internal politics that dominated Thailand's clerical life. His ability to explain complex philosophical and religious ideas in

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his native southern 'Pak Tai' vernacular attracted many people to his wooded retreat.

Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu worked painstakingly to establish and explain the correct and essential principles of pristine Buddhism. His works were based on extensive research of the Pāli texts (Canon and Commentaries), followed by personal experiment and practice with these teachings. From this, he uncovered the Dhamma which truly quenches Dukkha, and which he in turn shared with anyone interested. His goal was to produce a complete set of references for present and future research and practice. His approach was always scientific, straightforward, and practical.

Progressive elements in Thai society, especially the young, have been inspired by his wide ranging thought, teaching, and selfless example. Since the 1960s, activists and thinkers in such areas such as education, social welfare, and rural development have drawn upon his teaching, advice, and friendship. His word has helped inspire a new generation of socially concerned monks.

Although his formal education was limited to seven years, plus some beginner's Pāli studies, he has been given eight Honorary Doctorates by Thai universities. Numerous Doctoral theses have been written about his work. His books, both written and transcribed from talks, fill a room at the National Library and influence all serious Thai Buddhists.

Since the founding of *Suan Mokkh*, he studied all schools of Buddhism and all the major religious traditions. This interest was practical rather than scholarly. He sought to unite all

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genuinely religious people, meaning those working to overcome selfishness, in order to work together for world peace. This broad mindedness won him friends and students from around the world, including Christians, Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs.

Before his death in 1993, he established an International Dhamma Hermitage Center to aid in the teaching of Buddhism and other yogic practices to international students. Here courses for introducing foreigners to the correct understanding of Buddhist principles and practice are held in English at the beginning of every month. Retreats in Thai are also organized. Further, he hoped that meetings would be organized for Buddhists from around the world to identify and agree upon the “Heart of Buddhism”.

In his last days, he also established some new projects for carrying on the work of serving the Lord Buddha and Humanity. One is Suan Atammayatārāma, a small training center for foreign monks in a quiet grove near the retreat center. The guidelines he laid down aim to develop “Dhamma Missionaries” who are well versed in the Buddha’s teaching, have solid experience of Vipassana, and can adapt Buddha-Dhamma to the problems of the world.

A sister project is called Dhamma Mātā (Dhamma Mothers). Society is suffering from the lack of women spiritual teachers; they exist but are not given adequate recognition. Dhamma Mātā is for raising the status of women by providing better opportunities and support in Buddhist monastic life and meditation practice. The hope is that more women who can “give birth to others through Dhamma”.

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He passed away on 25<sup>th</sup> May 1993.

*Some of his English translation works:*

1. *The A, B, Cs of Buddhism* (1982)
2. *Handbook of Mankind*
3. *Heartwood of the Bodhi Tree* (1985)
4. *Keys to Natural Truth* (1988)
5. *Me and Mine: Selected Essays of Bhikkhu Buddhadasa* (1989)
6. *Mindfulness with Breathing* (1989)
7. *No Religion* (1996)
8. *Paticcasamuppada: Practical Dependent Origination* (2002)
9. *Teachings Dhamma with Pictures* [Published by Ministry of Education, Thailand on the occasion of Centenary Birthday Celebration of the birth of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu (27 May 1906 – 27 May 2006)]

*References:*

1. *Heartwood of the Bodhi Tree*: Ed. Santikaro Bhikkhu (Wisdom Publications, Boston, 1994)
2. Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhadasa>
3. <http://www.suanmokkh.org/>
4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bgw97YTOriw>

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### Venerable P.A. Payutto

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Venerable P.A. Payutto (Phra Brahmaganabhorn) is a well-known Thai Buddhist monk, an intellectual, and a prolific writer. He is among the most brilliant Buddhist scholars in the Thai Buddhist history. He authored *Buddha Dhamma*, which is acclaimed as one of the masterpieces in Buddhism that puts together Dhamma and natural laws by drawing extensively upon Pāli Canon and Commentaries.

P.A. Payutto was born Prayudh Arayangkura as the fifth child of Samran and Chunkee Arayangkoon on January 12, 1938 in Si Prachan District, Suphanburi Province, Thailand.

He received his early education in Suphanburi. During his childhood, P.A. Payutto suffered a lot of illnesses, some of which involved him in surgeries and many have followed him until today. Poor health made it difficult for him to commit to school and formal education. Discouraged by his health, he came back to Suphanburi after completing junior high school at Pathum Khongkha School in Bangkok in 1950.

Being assured that he could continue his education without having to get involved physically, as is the case in school, he entered the monastery, with the family's support, to seek religious education, being ordained as a novice (*sāmaṇera*) at the age of 13. He began the study of Pāli and received training in Vipassanā meditation. Under his father's encouragement, he moved to *Wat Phra Piren* in Bangkok and went on to achieve the highest-level (ninth-level) studies in the Pāli language while

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still a *sāmaṇera*, for which he was granted a royal ordination ceremony into monkhood in the Temple of the Emerald Buddha on July 24, 1961. He embraced the monastic name 'Payutto', literally 'a person with unrelenting efforts'.

P.A. Payutto received a Bachelor's degree with first-class honours in Buddhism from Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University in 1962. After graduation, he was appointed Associate Dean of the same University for ten years and made substantial contributions to it in terms of management and academic excellence. He played an important role in modernizing Sangha's education by relating knowledge in Buddhism to contemporary social issues.

He was the abbot of *Wat Phra Piren* in Bangkok between 1973 and 1976, but resigned to dedicate himself in academic work. He published a number of books and articles, and regularly attended academic seminars and conferences, surrounding himself with contemporary scholars and intellectuals.

A highly-revered monk and eminent scholar, he is also widely respected as an eloquent preacher and authoritative writer, with thousands of Dhamma talk recordings and over three hundred books on Buddhism to his credit. He is especially renowned for his book *Buddha Dhamma* which is considered as *magnum opus* on Theravada Buddhism.

P.A. Payutto strongly believes in strict interpretation of Pāli Canon, very much in line with the Theravada tradition. He went public in many occasions in defence of Pāli Canon whenever its integrity was challenged. During the *Dhammakāya scandal*, in

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which the original mentioning of 'Dhammakāya' in Pāli Canon was misinterpreted by a group of monks in their own favor, broke out in mid-1990s, P.A. Payutto published a book that specifically dealt with the case. In the *Dhammakāya Episode*, P.A. Payutto reviews the essence of Pāli Canon, cites Pāli texts misinterpreted by this group of monks, and counter-argues in the context of genuine Pāli Canon. He argues that '*Dhammakāya*' was not truthfully interpreted, and points out that if the group continued to uphold the false interpretation, they could not do it under the umbrella of Theravada Buddhism.

P.A. Payutto has put a lot of efforts on defending the integrity of Pāli Canon throughout his life. He has employed his well-versed understanding of Pāli Canon not only to uphold the Sangha institution in Thailand, but also to educate the general public of any misconceptions about Pāli Canon. In so doing, he effectively uses verbatim quotes from Pāli Canon, cites relevant discourses, and draws conclusions to argue for his case and counter-argue against and correct any misconceived views.

P.A. Payutto has dedicated his entire life to spreading Buddhist teachings through literary works, giving sermons and lectures at several universities at home and abroad. He has been a special lecturer teaching Buddhism at the University of Pennsylvania, Swarthmore College and at Harvard University in the US.

In recognition of his outstanding scholarship and significant contribution to Buddhism, many institutions in Thailand and abroad have conferred upon him honorary doctorate degrees and other prestigious titles. Among such accolades is UNESCO's Prize for Peace Education, which was given to him

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in 1994. In 1995 he was honoured with the post of *Tipitakācharya*, a scholar well versed in Pāli Canon, by Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, India.

Currently, he is the abbot of Wat Nyanavesakavan in Nakhon Pathom, Sam Phran district.

***Some of his notable works in English:***

1. *Dependent Origination: The Buddhist Law of Conditionality* (Tr. Bruce Evans, Buddhadhamma Foundation, Bangkok, 1994)
2. *Vision of the Dhamma: A Collection of Buddhist Writings in English* (Wat Nyanavesakavan, Nakhon Pathom, 2007)
3. *Good, Evil and Beyond: Karma in The Buddha's Teaching* (Tr. Bhikkhu Puriso, Buddhadhamma Foundation, 1993)
4. *Dependent Origination: The Buddhist Law of Conditionality* (Tr. by Robin Moore, Buddhadhamma Foundation, Bangkok, 2011)
5. *Nibbāna: The Supreme Peace* (Tr. Robin Moore, Chandrapen Publishing House, Bangkok, 2010)
6. *Psychology in Human Development the Natural Way* (Tr. Ass. Prof. Srirawat Sri khruedong, MCU)
7. *The Three Signs Anicca, Dukkha and anattā in the Buddha's teaching* (Tr. Suriyo Bhikkhu, Chandrapen Publishing House, Bangkok, 2007)

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2. Wikipedia: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prayudh\\_Payutto](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prayudh_Payutto)

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3. <http://www.buddhistteachings.org/buddhadhamma-translations-2/ajahn-payutto-biography>
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**Satya Narayan Goenka**

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Noted for revitalizing the lost tradition of vipassana meditation in India, and spreading it to the world, Satya Narayan Goenka was a prominent lay meditation teacher, who neither hailed from any Buddhist family nor of any meditative tradition. Nonetheless, he was an excellent orator and persuasive speaker with prolific writing skills, who taught meditation in a non-sectarian outlook, advocating that vipassana meditation transcends the divisions of caste, creed, colour, race, believers, and non-believers alike.

A protégé of U Ba Khin, Mr. Goenka was born on 30<sup>th</sup> January 1924, in an Indian ethnic Marwari family in Mandalay, British Burma. U Ba Khin (1899-1971), the teacher of Mr. Goenka, himself was a lay meditation teacher and a senior civil servant, who learned meditation from U Po Thet (1873-1945), a famous lay teacher of the time, who, on the other hand, had practiced meditation under Ledi Sayādaw (1846-1923). Thus, in a sense, Mr. Goenka's teacher's lineage trace back to Ledi Sayādaw.

Before immersing himself in meditation, Mr. Goenka was a successful businessman of Mandalay and headed in several key positions in Commercial Chambers of Burma, and had accompanied trade delegations to many international forums.

Since his young age, Mr. Goenka was suffering from migraine headache, which turned severe as his age grew. He had taken medication from different physicians, and consulted doctors of fame and name – all in vain. Having medical communities

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failed him, he, at the advice of a friend decided to turn towards meditation. In 1955, he met U Ba Khin in Rangoon, with whom he initially sat the ten days vipassana meditation retreat.

Soon he felt the benefit of vipassana meditation within himself, which help in coping with the migraine, which eventually healed him. For the next 14 years, he trained under U Ba Khin. With the nationalization of businesses and industries by the military government, Mr. Goenka wanted to leave for India, and having received permission from U Ba Khin, his teacher, to carry on the tradition of vipassana meditation, he shifted to India in 1969.

Having taught from makeshift premises for seven years, in 1976, he founded Vipassana International Academy, also known as Dhamma Giri, in Igatpuri, in the State of Maharashtra. From there he regularly conducted meditation classes, where thousands of local and Western meditators attended his classes, which was growing day by day. As his classes grew so was the need for more teachers, and to fill the gaps, he trained many of his former students as his assistants to depute during his absences.

In 1985, the Vipassana Research Institute was established to investigate and publish literatures on vipassana and its effects. In the meantime, his fame spread far and wide with the words of the mouth, since he refused media glare, and was invited to conduct similar meditation retreats from many parts of India and abroad. Since 1980s, as a meditation teacher, he travelled to

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many countries of North America, Latin America, Europe, Asia-Pacific, Middle-East and Africa.

In response to ever-growing demand, today there are more than 120 permanent vipassana centres worldwide have been opened, including 56 centres in India. To maintain its purity, Mr. Goenka insists, meditation must never become a business. Courses and centres operating under his direction are all run on a totally non-profit basis. He himself receives no remuneration for his work directly or indirectly, nor do the assistant teachers whom he has authorized to teach courses as his representatives. He distributes the technique of Vipassana purely as a service to humanity, to help those who are in need of help.

Mr. Goenka tried to ensure that the whole network does not become a sectarian religion or cult. He recommends the expansion should be for the benefit of others, not mere expansion for the sake of expansion – but with the intention of benefiting more people, rather than for the sake of organisation's growth.

He, in fact, was able to push vipassana meditation in the Indian prisons. In 1993, at the invitation of the then Inspector General of Prisons in New Delhi, Ms. Kiran Bedi, Mr. Goenka conducted 10-day vipassana classes in Tihar Jail, one of the biggest prisons in India. Beside prisoners, countless numbers of military and police personnel too have attended his classes. Since then it has become a regular feature of prisons.

He had delivered speeches on the benefit of vipassana meditation in various and diverse institutions of the world. He had spoken in the United Nations General Assembly, to the

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members in Indian Parliament; from the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and in the Silicon Valley Indian Professionals Association.

His lifetime wishes was fulfilled when the construction of Global Vipassana Pagoda was completed in 2008, built on the outskirts of Mumbai, which he hopes will bridge communities, countries, races and sects. In 2012, the Indian government conferred Padma Bhushan, the third highest civilian honour for his social work.

He passed away on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2013, at his home in Mumbai.

### *Some of his notable works:*

1. *50 Years of Dhamma Service* (2004)
2. *Come, People of the World: Translations of selected Hindi couplets* (1989)
3. *For the Benefit of Many: Talks and Answers to Questions from Vipassana Students 1983-2000* (second edition, 2000)
4. *Meditation Now, Inner Peace through Inner Wisdom* (reprint 2011)
5. *The Discourse Summaries: Talks from a Ten-day Course in Vipassana Meditation* (2000)
6. *Satipatthana Sutta Discourses: Talks from a course in Mahā-satipatthāna Sutta* (condensed by Patrick Given-Wilson) (1998)
7. *The Gracious Flow of Dharma* (1994)
8. *The Gem Set in Gold* (2006)

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9. *The Art of Living: Vipassana Meditation: As Taught by S. N. Goenka*: Hart, William (1987)
10. *The Art of Dying: by Vipassana Meditation Teachers S. N. Goenka and others*: Ed. Virginia Hamilton

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2. Vipassana Research Institute, Igatpuri, Maharashtra, India:  
<http://www.vridhamma.org/Teachers-4>
3. Vipassana Meditation:  
<http://www.dhamma.org/en/about/goenka>

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### Bhikkhu Jagdish Kashyap

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The Founder-Director of Nava Nālandā Mahāvihāra, Nalanda, Bhikkhu Jagdish Kashyap was one of the leading figure in revivifying Pāli and Buddhist studies in India. He together with Rahul Sanskrityayana and Anand Kausalyayana, both alumni of Vidyālañkāra Pirivena of Sri Lanka, would form the ‘trio’ of the new ‘activist’ Buddhist monks of India who played substantial roles in the resurgence of Buddhism in India for decades.

Born as Jagdish Narain into a Hindu Kayastha Brahmin family on 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 1908 at Ranchi in the state of Jharkhand in India, his father Shyam Narain was an employee in the Judge’s Court in Ranchi. Shyam Narain originally hailed from Rounia village in the district of Gaya, but after his marriage with the only child of Ram Prasad, a government employee in Ranchi, he was persuaded to move to Ranchi and settled there permanently.

Jagdish Narain had his early school education at Ranchi. He passed his matriculation examination from Ranchi Zila School in 1925. After that he was sent to Patna for higher studies. He did his Intermediate Arts from New College in 1927, and Bachelor of Arts from Patna College in 1929. From Patna he went to Varanasi and did his Master of Arts in Philosophy from Banaras Hindu University in 1931. In the following year he did a second M.A. privately in Sanskrit from the same university.

Since his High School days, he was ‘an ardent Arya Samaji’, who had a commitment to social service and nationalist movement, and has taken vow to remain a celibate, a ‘*brahmacārī*’.

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After completing his M.A., Jagdish Narain wanted to do doctoral work in Buddhist Philosophy. Some well-wishers advised him first to study Pāli Tipiṭaka in original in order to do doctorate. He tried to contact Vidyālaṅkāra Pirivena by writing a letter in Sanskrit expressing his desire to study Pāli, but had not got any response. Later on, he got into contact with Rahul Sanskritayana at Patna, who had recently returned back from abroad. Rahul Sanskritayana impressed him by citing the Kālāma Sutta, where the Buddha has asked to accept religious teachings only after one is fully convinced. It had hugely impacted the mind of Jagdish Narain. Through Rahul Sanskritayana and Anand Kausalyayana, who were already become a Buddhist monk and both had studied in Vidyālaṅkāra Pirivena, Jagdish Narain left for Sri Lanka in November 1933, and joined the Vidyālaṅkāra Pirivena. There he taught Sanskrit and learned more Pāli.

In 1934, he was ordained by Ven. L. Dhammananda Mahāthero of the Vidyālaṅkāra Pirivena, thus Jagdish Narain became Bhikkhu Jagdish Kashyap, for Kashyap was his Hindu *gotra* (family lineage) name. During the period of his study and training in Sri Lanka, Bhikkhu Jagdish Kashyap had started translating *Dīghanikāya* in Hindi, jointly with Rahul Sanskritayana. In Sri Lanka, he even spent a year in the Salagala forest for meditation. Toward the end of 1936 he returned back to India.

In 1937, he shifted to Sarnath and associated himself with the activities of Maha Bodhi Society and started translating Pāli Tipiṭaka into Hindi and doing other literary and scholarly works. When the society founded a High School in Sarnath, he

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was invited to be the first Head Master. The school was first housed in the Birla Dharmasala. It was built by Seth Jugal Kishore Birla, the well known philanthropist of India, and thus Bhikkhu Jagdish Kashyap came into contact with him. It was due to this contact with the philanthropist and S. Radhakrishnan that he succeeded in persuading his *alma mater*, Banaras Hindu University, to start the teaching of Pāli in 1940. He worked there for nine years.

In 1949 he decided to leave Varanasi and went on *cārikā* to meet people in the interior villages of Magadha. He met and taught the people about their ancient cultural, literary and religious heritage. While he was doing all this, the Bihar government was also planning to start three Institutes for the study of Sanskrit, Pāli and Prākṛit in Mithila, Nalanda and Vaisali respectively. Bhikkhu Jagdish Kashyap was a natural selection for his vast knowledge and experience to head the Pāli Institute at Nalanda. Nalanda at that time was a desolate and deserted place where no building was available for temporary housing the Pāli Institute and so he started the work from Rajgir and it was only later that he moved to Nalanda. This Institute later developed into the present Nava Nālandā Mahāvihāra. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the first President of India, laid the foundation stone on 20<sup>th</sup> November 1951.

When the government of India decided to celebrate the 2500<sup>th</sup> of Buddha Jayanti in 1956, he urged upon the state and central governments to bring out the whole of Tipiṭaka in Devanāgarī script, which was his strong desire to bring out standard version. His proposal was accepted by the government as a five-year project and it was jointly sponsored by the State of Bihar and

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Government of India. It was indeed an ambitious undertaking of organization and scholarship to complete the work in editing and publishing the 41 volumes in a period of five years. The first volume of the series had been brought out in 1956 on the occasion of the Buddha Jayanti and the complete set was ready in 1961. The completion project was celebrated at Sarnath in 1961 when the complete set was presented to Jawaharlal Nehru.

He passed away on 28<sup>th</sup> January 1976, in Rajgir.

***Some of his notable works:***

1. *Buddhism and Essentials of Philosophy* (in Sanskrit) (1934)
2. *Buddha Dhamma* (in English), (1935)
3. *Dīghanikāya* (Hindi Translation), jointly with Rahul Sankrityayana (1937)
4. *Milindaprasna* (Hindi Translation), (1937)
5. Eleven Books of *Khuddaka Nikāya* (Devanāgarī version of PTS edition), Edited jointly with Rahul Sankrityayana and Anand Kausalyayana, (1937)
6. *Udāna* (Hindi Translation), (1938)
7. *Pāli Mahāvvyākaraṇa* (Hindi) (1940)
8. *The Abhidhamma Philosophy Vol. I* (English), (1942)
9. *The Abhidhamma Philosophy Vol. II* (English), (1943)
10. *Pāschātya Tarkaśāstra, Two Vols*, (Hindi) (1947)
11. *Buddhism for Everybody* (revised edition of *Buddha Dhamma*), (1949)
12. *Pāli Nisseni*, (1951)
13. *Samyuttanikāya* (Hindi Translation), (1954)
14. *Pāli Tipiṭaka, 41 Vols*, General Editor, (Devanāgarī Edition), 1961

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15. *Samantapāsādikā*, Pt. III Jointly with Birbal Sharma (1967)
16. *The Buddhist Outlook*, (1968)
17. *Pañcappakaraṇa Aṭṭhakathā*, Pt. I (*Dhātukathā-Puggala-paññati Aṭṭhakathā*), Jointly with Mahesh Tiwary (1968)
18. 'A Buddhist View on the Freudian Psychology' (in *Maha Bodhi*, Vol. 77. Nos. 4-5)
19. *Tripitaka Anukramaṇikā*, Vol. I, (General Editor), (1969)
20. *Pañcappakaraṇa Aṭṭhakathā*, Pt. II, (*KathāvatthuAṭṭhakathā*), Jointly with Mahesh Tiwary (1969)
21. *Pañcappakaraṇa Aṭṭhakathā*, Pt. III, (*Yamaka-Paṭṭhāna Aṭṭhakathā*), Jointly with Mahesh Tiwary (1970)

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2. *Studies in Pali and Buddhism: In honour of Bhikkhu Jagdish Kashyap*: Ed. A.K. Narain (B.R. Publishing, New Delhi, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 2006)
3. *The Pioneers of Buddhist Revival in India*: D.C. Ahir (Sri Satguru Publications, New Delhi, 1989)
4. Wikipedia: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jagdish\\_Kashyap](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jagdish_Kashyap)

**Venerable Yātrāmulle Dharmārama<sup>†</sup>**

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Venerable Yātrāmulle Dhammārama was born in 1828 at Yātrāmulla village near Bentara town in southern Sri Lanka. His father was Mallava-āraccige Don Seeman Kommalabadde Police Vidānarāḷahāmi. In 1842, when he was fourteen years old he got ordination from Venerable Bentara Atthadassi Mahāthera, the then chief incumbent of Vanavāsa Mahāvihāraya, Bentara. In 1855, Yātrāmulle Dhammārama got his higher ordination from the Malvatta Chapter of the Siam Mahānikāya in Ceylon.

Popularly known as ‘Y Terunnānse’ among the officers of the Ceylon Civil Service, who studied Pāli and Sinhala from him, Yātrāmulle Dhammārama counted among his pupil at least two very prominent British Orientalists: namely R.C. Childers and T.W. Rhys Davids.

Yatramulle Dhammarama had taught Pāli for many years to Robert Caesar Childers (1838-1871) who was a member of the Civil Service since 1853 and Childers compiled the first Pali-English Dictionary. He also taught Pāli to Thomas Williams Rhys Davids (1843-1922) who later founded the Pali Text Society at London, and who propagated oriental studies and Buddhism in the West. The founder of Pali Text Society owes a lot in its development to the Buddhist Sangha of Sri Lanka, like the Ven. Yātrāmulle Dhammārama, Ven. Hikkaḍuwe Sri Sumangala, and Ven. Waskaḍuwe Sri Subhūti. Rhys Davids

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<sup>†</sup> Contributed by Ven. Dr. Medagampitiye Wijithadhamma

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delivered a series of lectures in 1881, and these lectures were printed in book form under the title, 'Hibbert Lectures' wherein he pays a tribute to his Pāli and Buddhism teacher Yātrāmulle Dhammārama.

The eulogy of Rhys Davids on Yātrāmulle Dhammārama is most interesting. He recorded, "I once knew such a man he would have seemed nothing to a passing observer, but then a deceased looking monk rather mean in stature. When he first came to me, the hand of death was already upon him. He was sinking into the grave from effects of a painful and incurable malady. I had heard of his learning as a Pāli scholar and of his illness and was grateful to him for leaving home under such circumstances to teach a stranger. There was a strange light in his sunken eyes, and he was constantly turning away from questions of Pāli to question on Buddhism. I find him versed in all the poetry and ethics of the suttas. There was an indescribable attraction about him. His simplicity and high minded filled me with reverence".

There are several documents in the British Museum Library which vouch for Yātrāmulle Dhammārama's erudition in the field of Pāli and Buddhism as well as his ability in the metrical composition in Pāli, Sanskrit and Sinhala. Among them is eulogy on Childers written in 1862 and called the "Childers Aṣṭakaya" i.e. "Eight-verse poem on Childers" where each verse ends with the usual wishes for Childers's health and prosperity.

There are more important six long letters amounting to 99 folios which Yātrāmulle Dhammārama had written to Childers

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between May 1869 and 1870. These contain his replies to numerous questions on Pāli words, grammatical forms and Buddhist doctrines which were posed by Childers in the course of his presentation of the Pali Dictionary.

The British administrators, possibly as several of them were his Sinhala students, held Yatramulle Dhammārāma in high esteem. Yatramulle Dhammārāma, in his letter to Childers on 4<sup>th</sup> April 1870, says how he and twenty other monks of his Nikāya were invited to Colombo on the occasion of the visit of Alfred, the Duke of Edinburgh, second son of Queen Victoria.

Even the briefest note on Yatramulle Dhammārāma must make reference to the uniquely inspiring and fertile intellectual background in which he grew and flourished. He was a pupil of Ven. Bentara Atthadassi, the founder of Bentota Vanavāsa Mahāvihāra, a scholar of great repute and an undaunted Buddhist reformer. A longest letter in Pāli, containing over 150 verses, of his mastery in Pāli language, his extensive knowledge on the history of Buddhism and his deep understanding of the rules of Vinaya in Buddhism. His dispute with the Prelates of Kandy culminated in the establishment of Sri Kalyāṇi Sāmagridharma Sanghasabhā at Koṭṭe, which performed its ordination ceremonies, independent of Kandy.

Not only did Yatramulle Dhammārāma have an excellent teacher in Ven. Atthadassi but he also had an equally inspiring band of fellow students. Among them were Weligama Sri Sumangala and Ven. Ambagahawatte Indāsabhavara Ñāṇasāmi Mahānāyaka Thera, the founder of the Rāmañña Nikāya were very famous.

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Yatramulle Dhammārāma passed away young at the age of 44 years and Childers had published obituaries in ‘Trubner’s Literary Register and Indian Antiquary’ eulogizing his silent service, humility and erudition. His death was described as a blow to students of Pāli. In the Preface of his Pali Dictionary, Childers mentioned the assistance he received from Yatramulle Dhammārāma with the comment that his premature death in January 1872 “deprived the Buddhist Church of one of its brightest ornaments”.

**Venerable Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala**

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The founder of Vidyodaya Pirivena, the revivalist Buddhist monastic institution in Ceylon, Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala was an eminent educationalist and scholar of eminence during British Ceylon. He emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Ceylon when Buddhists were derided and degraded to the lowest level by British colonials and Christian missionaries. He founded that institution precisely to counter the influence of Christianity in everyday and religious life of the Sinhalese Buddhists.

Born at Hettigoda, near Hikkaduwa, in Galle District on 20<sup>th</sup> January 1827, he was given the name Don Nicholas Abeyweera Gunawardana. His father was Johanis Abeyweera Gunawardana and Dandagoda Gamage Krishina Hamine was his mother.

In those days, to get a government education, a child must be baptized at a church by a Christian priest. Thus he was registered in the church as 'Nicholas', which was a Christian name. But he was prevented from gaining school education by an astrologer's prophesy that the boy will not be succeeded, and thus he was sent to a nearby temple.

Accordingly, his early education began at the village temple Thilakaramaya, Hikkaduwa. There he studied Sinhala, Pāli, Buddhism, and Sanskrit under Ven. Hikkaduwe Sobitha and Ven. Revata. Besides these subjects, Nicholas also learnt English and arithmetic from a lay teacher. At the age of 13, in 1840 Nicholas was ordained as a novice (*sāmaṇera*) at the Totagamuwa Rājamahāvihāra, Hikkaduwa, and renamed as 'Sumangala'. The young novice, thereafter, moved to Parama

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Dhammacetiya Pirivena, in Ratmalana, for his further studies where he studied under Ven. Walane Siddhartha.

Even before his higher ordination, novice Sumangala, being a studious and intelligent student mastered the entire '*tipiṭaka*' with its commentaries. He acquired the skills in comprehending, speaking, reading and writing in Pāli and gained an advanced knowledge of Sanskrit and English. He could quote Pāli passages without referring to any books or notes. His rare ability to quote Pāli passages and stanzas was beyond belief, and it created a great respect within the community of sangha and lay society.

In 1848, novice Sumangala was given higher ordination (*upasampadā*) from the Malwatta Chapter of Siyam Nikaya, Kandy. His preceptor was Ven. Walane Siddhartha of Parama Dhammacetiya Pirivena, Ratmalana. When his preceptor and teacher died, Sri Sumangala was invited to take over the charge of the temple, and was appointed the Principal of that pirivena.

The status of Buddhists and Buddhist education at the time in Ceylon was in dire threats. Buddhist monasteries as a centre of learning was slowly losing ground to newly established schools where Christians hold sway in every aspect of Sinhalese life – religious and secular. Besides, government jobs and opportunities were opened only for those who were educated at one of those Christian schools. Towns and villages were filled up with such schools. Few non-Christian schools that existed were on the verge of shutting down.

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Those sad affairs were prevailed in Colombo as well, the capital of British Ceylon. It was under such circumstances that Buddhist leaders of Colombo invited Sri Sumangala to lead the Buddhist cause from Colombo. In fact his leadership was sought after by Buddhist leaders of Colombo such as Don Philip de Silva Epa Appuhamy and Mudaliyar Don Carolis Hewawitharana who were two such ardent Buddhists.

The need to raise self-confidence of Sinhalese Buddhists were highly sought and to produce a band of leaders who could guide the leaderless people, Sri Sumanagala with the support of devoted Buddhists in 1873 founded the Vidyodaya Pirivena, Maligawatta. It was one of the few Buddhist centres founded to counteract the domineering influence of Christianity. In 1959, the Pirivena was given a university status.

It was also the time when there were hotly debates going on between Buddhist and Christians. Sri Sumangala had written numerous letters, booklets, and pamphlets to respond falsifying statements carried out by Christians. He, at the same time, in 1873 advised and clarified many abstruse doctrinal points to Migettuwatte Gunananda, the hero of Panadura Debate.

Reading a published work of the debate in the US, Henry Steele Olcott, the co-founder of Theosophical Society, was greatly influenced and decided in 1880 to come to Ceylon. He studied Pāli and Buddhism from Sri Sumangala at Vidyodaya Pirivena. Along with Sri Sumangala, Olcott established a whole new slew of Buddhist schools and colleges in the Island. Noteworthy of them are Ananda College, Colombo (1886), Dharmaraja College, Kandy (1887), Mahinda College, Galle (1892).

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Sri Sumangala was the chairman of 'Colombo Committee' that designed the Buddhist flag in 1885. He was for sometime became the Vice-President of Buddhist Theosophical Society and was a member of Royal Asiatic Society in Italy. In recognition of his outstanding contribution to the revival of Buddhist education and its causes, the Malwatte Chapter of Siyam Nikaya conferred on him the honorary title of '*Tripitakavāgiśvara*'.

He passed away on 27<sup>th</sup> April 1911 in Colombo.

### *Some of his notable works:*

1. *Brahma Dharmaya*
2. *Warna Reethi (1873)*
3. *Masarthu Lakshana (1858)*
4. *Translation of Mahāvamsa to Sinhalese (1847)*
5. *Sidath Sangara Sannasa*
6. *Kavya Shekhara Sannasa*
7. *Balawatharatikawa*
8. *Pāli Nāmapada Malawa*

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### Venerable Migettuwatte Gunananda

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During the British colonial period, due to relentless Christian missionary activities Sinhalese Buddhists in Ceylon were on the verge of losing their culture, identity and religion. The newly converts refused to acknowledge their Sinhalese or Buddhist identity lest they would lose their jobs or impede their children's education. They hated themselves. The confidence of Buddhists, on the other hand, was at the lowest level. It is at this juncture that many Sinhalese nationalist Buddhists rose up and took up the challenge and started to defend themselves with writing and debating. Migettuwatte Gunananda, an eloquent speaker, polemical orator and a brilliant debater, was one of them.

He was born on 9<sup>th</sup> February 1823 as Miguel Mendis, to Asaneris Mendis and Kalu Dura Maldo, who were rich Buddhist family at Migettuwatte (Mohottiwatte) near Balapitiya, in Galle District.

Miguel Mendis had his early education at a catholic school in his village and studied Bible and Christian doctrine with a catholic priest. In fact, he had almost decided to become a catholic priest until he met some Buddhist monks from nearby temples, which caused him to change his mind. He stayed at the temple Gal Uda Viharaya, in Dodanduwa and was given ordination as a novice (*sāmaṇera*) at the age of twelve. His teacher Ven. B. Gunaratna sent him to Colombo for studies and stayed at the temple Dīpaduttārāmaya, Kotahena. Unfortunately,

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his father died at that time and he had to disrobe and return back to his village.

Mr. Abraham de Alwis, a great benefactor, recognizing his abilities undertook to sponsor his education and was thus given opportunity to study at Wesley College, where he learnt English, Christianity and Buddhism. There he acquired all the necessary skills, which helped him to confront the future challenges. After the death of his mother in 1944, he once again entered temple and was given higher ordination (*upasampadā*) at his former temple at Dodanduwa.

By then the young monk was well-versed in Sinhala, Pāli, Sanskrit and English. His knowledge and outlook broaden. He became aware of the plight of Buddhism and Buddhists in Ceylon. At that time, discrimination against Buddhists were widespread, and their customs, traditions, religions were ridiculed and looked down upon. Migettuwatte Gunananda seeing those prejudices made up his mind to restore and reawaken Sinhalese Buddhist identity, and moved to his former temple in Kotahena, Colombo. From there he started writing books and pamphlets and dexterously destroyed all charges levelled against Buddhists and Buddhist doctrines by Christians.

Equipped with excellent debating skills and an eloquent speaker, he challenged all the eminent clergymen and learned Christians to meet him in open debate. Between 1865 to 1886, five such debates were held in various towns. These debates later came to be known as *Pañca mahāvāda* (Five great debates), were held at Baddegama, Udanwita, Gampola, Panadura and Orugodawatte.

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In earlier cases, the debates were restricted to exchanging letters relating to certain topics raised by the Christian priests and strongly rebutted by Migettuwatte Gunananda and Hikkaduwe Sumangala, and turn the table against Christianity itself.

The Panadura Debate, one of the most notable debates between Buddhists and Christians, was held on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> August 1873 at Panadura. The debate arose as a result of a sermon delivered on 12<sup>th</sup> June 1873 at the Wesleyan Chapel by a Christian priest David de Silva on the teachings of Buddha with reference to human soul. A week later, Migettuwatte Gunananda strongly criticised it and denounced it as untrue and a debate was initiated.

The debate did not confine to soul theory only but were expanded on a range of issues, nature of God, the Soul, the Resurrection on the one hand, to the concept of Karma, Rebirth, Nirvana and the principle of Dependent Origination, on the other. The Christian side was led by David de Silva and Buddhists were led by Migettuwatte Gunananda.

David de Silva who initiated the debate by quoting Pāli with flaw grammar and vocabulary was quickly seized by Migettuwatte Gunananda and rebutted that one whose Pāli quotation is full of grammatical and vocabulary errors cannot be expected to grasp the deep and abstruse meaning of the Dhamma. Migettuwatte Gunananda, who was trained in Christian doctrines early in his life, exposed inconsistency of the Christianity itself.

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The triumphant of Migettuwatte Gunananda in the debate set the seal on quiet recovery of Buddhist confidence in the Island for decades. The win, on the other hand, had wider implications nationally and internationally. Within the country it raised pride of Sinhalese Buddhists, internationally, it created awareness on Buddha Dhamma in the West. The debate was translated and later published in a book by J.M. Peebles with an introduction ‘*Buddhism and Christianity: face to face*’. Henry Steele Olcott, the co-founder of Theosophical Society, got a copy of it. After reading, he became interested in Buddhism came to Ceylon in May 1880. With his arrival, the Buddhist revival movement got a leader who could deal the colonial rulers on level ground.

He passed away on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1890.

***Some of his notable works:***

1. *Riviresa*
2. *Lakmini Kirana*
3. *Sathya Margaya*
4. *Durlabdi Vinodini* (1862)

***References:***

1. *Controversy at Panadura or Pānadurā Vādaya*: Pranith Abhayasundara (State Printing Corporation, Colombo, 1990)
2. *Sri Lanka's Modern Writers and Patriots*: L. B. Herath (Samayawardhana Book Shop, Colombo, 2007)
3. *Buddhism and Christianity*: J.M. Peebles (Godage International Publishers, Colombo, 2005)

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5. <http://www.island.lk/2008/09/20/features3.html>
6. <http://archives.dailynews.lk/2003/08/19/fea05.html>
7. <http://sinhalasangha.wordpress.com/ven-migettuwatte-gunananda-thero/>

## Venerable Balangoda Ananda Maitreya

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An author, globetrotter, centenarian, and simple Buddhist monk, Ananda Maitreya was one of the distinguished figures of Theravada Buddhism, who did not have any crave for awards, titles and honours, but would accept those just to appreciate the presenters. In the course of his lifetime he has held some of the highest academic and ecclesiastical posts; yet those honours and fames hardly touched him inwardly.

Ananda Maitreya was born on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1896 as Punchi Mahattaya, in Kirindigala, Balangoda, Sabaragamuwa Province, British Ceylon. His parents were N.A. Mathises Appuhamy and B. Heenmanike. His mother died when he was just 14 days old, and he was brought up by his uncle's family. He had his early education at Kumara Vidyalaya, Balangoda.

Aspiring to live a monastic life, he requested repeatedly to his foster parents to allow him to enter monastery. His foster parents yielded to his demand and on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1911, at the age of 15 he was given ordination (*sāmaṇera*) at the temple Sri Nandaramaya, Udumulla, Balangoda under the preceptor-ships of Ven. D. Dhammananda and Ven. D. Seelananda. On 14<sup>th</sup> July 1916, he was given higher ordination (*upasampadā*) at the same temple.

He was mostly a self-taught personality. In 1919, he entered Ananda College, Colombo, and became a teacher of the same college in 1922. He did not restrict himself to the study of Theravada Buddhism, but ventured in studying varied subjects such as Mahayana, Mantra, Yoga, etc.

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When Nalanda College was opened in Colombo in 1925, he was selected as the first teacher of Buddhism. It was, in fact, he who has chosen the name of the college as 'Nalanda', and created the motto of the college as '*wisdom beautifies character*' which is still in used.

In 1930, he founded the Sri Dhammananda Pirivena in Balangoda. Later, he became the professor of Mahayana Buddhism at Vidyodaya University, and then was appointed as Dean, Faculty of Buddhist Studies. On 1<sup>st</sup> October 1966, he was elevated to the post of Vice-Chancellor of the same university.

During the Sixth Buddhist Council (*Chattha Sangāyāna*) held at Yangon from 1954 to 1956 by the government of Burma, Ananda Maitreya had represented the Ceylon Bhikkhu Sangha, and offered his vast knowledge on Buddhist Scriptures. In honour of his immense contribution to the Buddha Sāsana, and for his great knowledge on Buddhist Scriptures, the government of Myanmar in 1955 conferred on him the title of '*Aggamahāpaṇḍita*'.

Ananda Maitreya belonged to Amarapura Nikāya, which is one of the three prominent nikāyas in Sri Lanka. In 1954 he was appointed to the post of the Saṅgha Nāyaka of *Sabaragamu-Saddhammawansa Nikaya*, and in September 1969 appointed as the president of Amarapura Saṅgha Sabhā of Sri Lanka.

Ananda Maitreya was a prolific writer and had written more than fifty books, both in English and Sinhala, to his credit. To mention few, when he was observing his rains' residence at Amaravati Monastery in England, some disciples of Ven. Ajahn

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Sumedho wanted to learn Pāli from him. Although he taught them then by preparing short handouts for their easy learning, but those handouts with few modifications pave the way for the book '*Pāli Made Easy*' which first came out in 1988, and is still being used by students of Pāli for reference.

During his lifetime, Ananda Maitreya has visited many countries in the East as well as in the West. He first visited England in July 1973, at the request of a Burmese gentleman U Myat Saw, and passed his rains residence at Oxford. There he used to give Dhamma talks every Saturday. After that his visits became regular and had given talks to Buddhist and non-Buddhist groups at some of the famous universities in the UK, like the Oxford, Cambridge, Nottingham, Lancaster, etc. From that time onward, he was a regular speaker to many monasteries and universities in the countries of Europe, USA, and Canada.

He had taught and trained several monks from the West in Pāli and Buddhist scriptures. One of his noteworthy disciples is Bhikkhu Bodhi, an American Buddhist monk and a finest Pāli Tipiṭaka translator, has spent two and half years (1972-1975) in his monastery Sri Nandaramaya, in Udumulla.

A believer of Sai Baba, a Hindu holy man of India, whom Hindus believe that the holy man is an omniscience and brings fortune, and therefore hang his photo at shops, houses, and vehicles. When Ananda Maitreya was almost become blind with cataract and fearing operation, had visited Sai Baba to get blessing. According to him the Baba was able to foresee his apprehension and advised him to go through the operation, which he later did.

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Although, he was an apolitical, but his association with late President Premadasa had attracted a lot of criticisms. The late President had named a village near Balangoda in his name and had built the temple *Battaramulla Chitta Viveka Asramaya*. Few months before his death, the Myanmar government conferred on him the title of '*Abhidhajamahāraṭṭhaguru*'.

He passed away on 18<sup>th</sup> July 1998.

### *Some of his notable works:*

1. *Buddhism: Lectures and Essays*, (Samayawardhana Press, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 1993),
2. *Life of the Buddha*
3. *Pali Made Easy* (Buddhist Cultural Centre, Dehiwala, Sri Lanka, 1997)
4. *The Dhammapada: The Path of Truth*

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**Venerable Narada Thero**

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Ven. Narada Thero, a celebrated missionary Buddhist monk of twentieth century Sri Lanka, is well-known for his excellent writings and engaging dhamma talks. An eloquent speaker both in Sinhala and English, he had travelled extensively to all the continents as a preacher and familiarized Buddhism in the lands where there were none.

Born as Sumanapala Perera on 14<sup>th</sup> July 1898 at Kotahena, near Colombo, his father was Kalonis Perera and mother Pabilina de Silva. The name 'Sumanapala' given to the child itself suggests that at the time there were serious Sinhala Buddhist upheaval searching for their own identities in the face of Christian name assault. It was the time when Buddhist revivalists started to raise the consciousness of Sinhala Buddhists.

His early education began at a Christian school in Kotahena and later joined St. Benedict College, also in Kotahena, where he did his secondary education. There beside secular subjects he studied Christian scriptures too, whose knowledge helped him a lot when he started to give sermons to Westerners. Owing to his deep interest in the subjects and exemplary behavior, one of his teachers even suggested that the young Sumanapala was ideal for Roman Catholic priesthood.

But destiny turned him instead to other direction where he left a lasting and lifelong mark. An uncle of him, a devout Buddhist, sent him to study under an erudite monk Ven. Pelene Vajirañāna Mahānāyaka of Vajirarāmaya, Bambalapitiya. The Venerable was an expert in Sinhala, Pāli and Sanskrit. A person

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of great disciplinarian, he was a friend, guide and instructor to many people whosoever came into his contact.

In 1918, at the age of 18 Sumanapala was ordained under Ven. Pelene Vajirañāna Mahānāyaka as a *sāmaṇera*, and renamed as 'Narada', and two years later he was given higher ordination (*upasampadā*). He continued his education and joined the University College, Colombo as external student and followed the courses Ethics, Logic and Philosophy. All these subjects came handy during his overseas missionary works.

In 1929, Narada Thera got his first opportunity to visit overseas when Anagarika Dharmapala invited the bhikkhu sangha for the opening ceremony of the newly built Mulagandhakuti Vihara in Sarnath. Since then he had visited many countries where he was the first to set foot as a Buddhist monk. His erudition and serenity combined with perfect command over English language fitted him well as a preacher and putting across abstruse teachings of the Buddha in a simple and eloquent manner.

Some of his successful overseas mission in Asia was in Vietnam, Indonesia, Nepal and Singapore. Narada Thera had undertaken more than 17 missionary missions to Vietnam, and considered it to be his second home. He sometimes stayed there for a year and gave counseling to Vietnamese people. He had organized Vesak celebration inviting Buddhist communities from all the different sects, in the process uniting the people. He opened Buddhist school with full curriculum and a library.

Narada Thera first visited Indonesia in 1934, thereby becoming first Theravadin monk to do so in centuries. He carried with him

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a sapling of Bo-tree of Anuradhapura and planted it in the precincts of famous Borobudur temple. In 1959, when he again visited Indonesia to participate in Vesak festivities, he ordained 6 Indonesians into Buddhist sangha and established a Chapter House (*sīmā*), thus firmly established Buddhism in that land.

He led at least 6 missions to Nepal. The most notable one was in 1946, when he met the King to seek royal decree for the sake of safe return of Buddhist monks who were exiled in India. Not only did he able to obtain the decree, but the King even declared Vesak as a national holiday.

In Singapore, he with the support of his devotees established first Theravadin Buddhist temple 'Lankaramaya' and a Chapter House (*sīmā*). While in Vietnam, he had visited the neighbouring countries of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and in 1959 to China.

In 1955, he visited Sydney, Australia on the invitation of the President of Buddhist Society of New South Wales. In 1947, he had taken a good-will to Africa, which took him to Mombasa, Dar-e-Salam, Zanzibar and Nairobi. At the invitation of Burmese and Sri Lanka ambassadors, in 1959 he visited Washington D.C. He visited England in 1949, and in 1956 he was invited to be the first resident-monk of London Buddhist Vihara. He also toured Sweden, Holland, Rome, Germany, France, Greece and Egypt.

Back home in Sri Lanka, he along with Piyadassi Thera and others popularized the *baṇa* style dhamma talks in 1960s and brought the Buddhist teachings to the day-to-day lives of the westernized middle class Sinhalese society. However, he did

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not restrict himself to rich middle class while giving dhamma talks, but go to lower and poorer class of Sri Lankan society and mingle with them while preaching the message of the Buddha.

He was an established author and translator of numerous Pāli books. He writes with carefully chosen words which are equally explicit and present abstruse teachings in simplest language.

He passed away on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1983, at the age of 86.

### ***Some of his notable works:***

1. *A Manual of Abhidhamma* (1956)
2. *An Elementary Pali Course* (1952)
3. *An Outline of Buddhism*
4. *Buddhism in a Nutshell* (1933)
5. *Dhammapada, Pali text and translation* (1963)
6. *Everyman's Ethics*
7. *Facts of Life*
8. *Life of Venerable Sariputta*
9. *The Buddha and his Teachings* (1964)
10. *The Buddhist Doctrine of Karma and Rebirth*
11. *The Way to Nibbana*
12. *The Mirror of the Dhamma: a manual of Buddhist recitations and devotional texts*

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2. [http://vajirarama.lk/Hamuduruwo/Narada\\_Maha\\_Thero.htm](http://vajirarama.lk/Hamuduruwo/Narada_Maha_Thero.htm)  
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3. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narada\\_Maha\\_Thera](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narada_Maha_Thera)

### Venerable Walpola Rahula

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Among many illustrious monk-scholars produced by Sri Lanka, the name of Walpola Rahula outshines all. He was one of the most potent and powerful writer-monk, whose writings have far-reaching bearing, both in the East as well as in the West. During the pre-and-post independence of Ceylon, he with his fellow monk-activists had written numerous letters and articles to sway the lawmakers towards the immediate needs and requirements of the Independent Ceylon.

He was born in a tiny village of Walpola, Southern Ceylon on 9<sup>th</sup> May 1907. It was the time when in Ceylon, Christianity was backed and supported by the then colonial government which was in complete contrast to Buddhism, the dominant religion of the natives. This discrimination against Buddhists and the role of monks being sidelined had implanted strong resentment in him, which is highly visible from his works and writings.

In 1920, at the age of 13 he was given ordination (*sāmaṇera*) under Ven. Paragoda Sumanasara. It was under Ven. Paragoda Sumanasara, a learned teacher in Sinhala, Pāli, Sanskrit and Buddhism, that Walpola Rahula had his early education. Further, he had his initial monastic training of a monk there, like living a frugal life, devoted to meditation, and depended on alms.

In 1927, he joined the Dharmaduta Sabhāva, a missionary group, whose aims were to eliminate caste system among the Sinhalese. During his missionary tours, Walpola Rahula strongly advocated the importance of putting the teaching of the

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Buddha in its original form. This approached of him although earned him many admirers, while it at the same time created many opponents.

He had private education and in 1936 passed the matriculation examination privately. After that he joined the University College, Ceylon, from where he graduated with honours in (Indo-Aryan), thus becoming the first Buddhist monk from Ceylon to do so in a university. It was there that he came into contact with his English teacher Prof. E.F.C. Ludowyk, and his supervisor Prof. G. P. Malalasekara and other leading personalities. His doctoral thesis was 'History of Buddhism in Ceylon', which he had completed in 1950 from the same university under the guidance of Prof. G.P. Malalasekara. Then, he went on to study Indian philosophy at Calcutta University and then, in 1950, under French scholarship he went to Sorbonne University, Paris, where he studied Mahāyāna Buddhism under Prof. Paul Demiéville.

While he was in Paris that, in 1958, the much-acclaimed book 'What the Buddha Taught' came out. The fact that research students, scholars and layperson alike still refer to it to get a concise and succinct introduction on Buddhism weight its value.

In 1964, Prof. Edmund F. Perry, Chairman of the Department of Religions at the Northwestern University in Illinois, invited Walpola Rahula to be the Professor of History and Literature of Religions, a newly created chair, the first Buddhist monk to do so at a major Western university. He also held positions at several other Western universities. There he, at the same time,

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became an influential person in founding the Washington Buddha Vihara at Washington D.C., the first Theravada vihara in the United States.

In 1966, the Sri Lankan government invited Walpola Rahula to take the position of Vice-Chancellor of the Vidyodaya University (now University of Sri Jayawardenapura). As a Vice-Chancellor, he tried to upgrade the standard of education of the university, but in 1969 he resigned prematurely from the post in protest against the political interferences in the autonomy of the university. Thereafter, he returned back to the United States and hold advisor and professorship at several universities, including the Oxford University in the U.K.

In the early 1980s, he again returned back to Sri Lanka and founded the 'Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka' to impart quality education to monks. In the same year some well-known scholars brought out a book in his honour, the 'Buddhist Studies in Honour of Walpola Rahula'. He continued to hold Chancellor of the 'Kelaniya University', till his death.

Walpola Rahula was noted not only for his great learning but also for his strong socialist views, and the belief that monks have a duty to play a role in guiding the political consciousness of the people. His seminal work the '*Bhikshuvage Urumaya*' (Heritage of the Bhikkhu) was written in response to his opponents who were against *bhikkhus* taking active part in social, economic, cultural, and political activities of the country. To justify his arguments, he selectively quoted from the Pāli canon and commentaries, the Anuradhapura and Pollonaruwa periods when some monks used take active role in the society.

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Nevertheless, in part due to his writings the electoral outcome of 1956 in Ceylon greatly altered the contour of the country.

He was awarded several titles and honours during his lifetime. The title, '*Tripitakavāgīśvarācārya*' was conferred on him in 1965 by Śrī Kalyāṇi Sāmagrī Saṅgha Sabhā. In 1978, the Nava Nālandā Mahāvihāra, India, conferred on him the degree of *Vidyāvāridhi* (D.Litt) *honoris causa*. In 1991, the Myanmar government conferred on him the title of '*Aggamahāpaṇḍita*'.

He passed away on 18<sup>th</sup> September 1997, at the age of 90.

### *Some of his notable works:*

1. *What the Buddha Taught* (1959)
2. *History of Buddhism in Ceylon: The Anuradhapura Period, 3<sup>rd</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> Century AD* (1956)
3. *Humour in Pali Literature and other Essays* (1997)
4. *The Heritage of the Bhikkhu: A Short History of the Bhikkhu in Educational, Cultural, Social and Political Life* (1974)
5. *Zen and Taming of the Bull: Towards the Definition of Buddhist Thought: Essays* (1978)
6. *Le Compendium de la Super Doctrine* (French)

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3. *Buddhist Studies in Honour of Walpola Rahula* (1980)
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### Venerable Polwatte Buddhadatta

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An author of number of books, an authoritative translator, an esteemed grammarian, and a respected lexicographer, the name of Ven. Polwatte Buddhadatta (Pen-name A. P. Buddhadatta) illumines the world of Pāli and Buddhist learning. Studied and trained in Sinhalese and Burmese Buddhist traditions, A. P. Buddhadatta was well-versed in Sinhala, Burmese, Pāli and English.

Born on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1887 to the devout Buddhist parents Oobadage Lewis Silva and Thusa Gamhewa Sanchihamy he was given ordination (*sāmaṇera*) on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1899 by Ven. Poramba Dhammadhara of Aggārāma, Polwatte, Ambalangoda. Three years later, to enhance his knowledge of Buddhism, he travelled to Burma where he studied Abhidhamma, Pāli and Burmese from eminent Burmese teachers. It was in Burma, in 1907, that he received his higher ordination (*upasampadā*).

He had a long personal relationship with the people and saṅgha of Myanmar, where he lived and studied for many years. When the Burmese government organized the Sixth Buddhist Council (*Chattha Saṅgāyāna*) from 1954 to 1956 at Yangon, he was also invited to participate in the deliberations of Buddhist scriptures and offered his immense knowledge of *Tipiṭaka* and the Pāli language. In appreciation of his vast learning in *Tipiṭaka* and great contributions in Pāli scholarship, the Burmese government, in 1954, conferred on him the title of '*Aggamahāpaṇḍita*', thus becoming the first Buddhist monk from Sri Lanka to receive that prestigious title.

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After returning back from Burma, A. P. Buddhadatta, in 1920, started to teach Pāli at Ananda College, Colombo. Although Pāli was being taught in Ceylon for many years among the monk circles but the structures of the syllabuses was not suitable for pupils in schools. So when the study of Pāli was introduced in schools, there were no authoritative books to refer to. Having comprehended about the difficulties in teaching Pāli, Mr. P. de S. Kularatna, the Principal of Ananda College, requested A. P. Buddhadatta to prepare a suitable Pāli book that can be taught at the college. The *Pālibhāshāvatarāṇa* (I, II, III), a compendium of Pāli grammar and composition for beginners in Sinhalese was the outcome of that call. To aid the learners, in 1926, he compiled a Pāli Reader named *Pālipāṭhāvalī*, which was a supplementary reader to Pāli course.

But as his books were written in Sinhalese characters, it was limited to Sinhalese speakers only and the urged of English educated students, who also wanted to learn Pāli, were not fulfilled. To meet the demand of those people, he wrote the New Pali Course Parts I & II in English, which came out in 1937. The Part III of the New Pali Course was issued for advanced learners, which was brought out in 1950. The books after few corrections in later editions are still being used by students of Pāli. They are, in fact, a handbook for beginners.

In 1935, he joined the University College, Ceylon, and served there as a lecturer for many years. Later, the Vidyodaya University conferred on him Ph.D. (*honoris causa*) in recognition for his great learning, and he was appointed the first professor of Buddhist Philosophy at the Vidyalankara University. The Vidyalankara University in recognition of his

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erudition in Pāli and Buddhism conferred the degree of D.Litt. (*honoris causa*).

As a scholar of Pāli and Buddhism, A. P. Buddhadatta had travelled several countries in Europe, like England, France, and Switzerland, where he had made contacts with eminent Buddhist scholars of the time like Rhys Davids couple, I.B. Horner, E.J. Thomas and other pioneers of Pali Text Society, London. He was always consulted by those scholars in matters of Pāli and Buddhism and sought his suggestion and clarification whenever any difficult and abstruse Pāli terms confronted by them.

He had edited *Saddhammappajotika* (3 vols) *Sammohavinodanī*, the '*Buddhadatta's Manuals*' (2 vols) for the Pali Text Society and various other Pāli works published by the Society. He had corrected Geiger's *Mahāvamsa*, whose minor mistakes that had crept in might have been overlooked by the original editor during his editing. He had more than 90 books to his credit.

In 1925, the Pali-English Dictionary of T.W. Rhys Davids and William Steede was published, which was an epoch-making addition in the study of Pāli. But it was too big and bulky to carry, and too expensive for school and college students to buy. Keeping in mind of those students, he compiled two small size dictionaries – Concise Pali-English Dictionary and English-Pali Dictionary. Owing to paper restriction during the wartime in 1940s, the publication of the dictionaries was delayed for some time. As a result, the Concise Pali-English Dictionary was first

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printed out in 1949, followed by English-Pali Dictionary in 1954.

A.P. Buddhadatta belonged to Kalyānawansa Nikāya, a branch of Amarapura Nikāya, and an abbot of Aggārāma Temple, Polwatta, Ambalangoda. In 1953, he was appointed as 'Anunāyaka' of Kalyānawansa Nikāya, and in 1957 he was appointed as the 'Mahānāyaka'. In 1954, he had written his autobiography named 'Sri Buddhadatta Charithaya', but is currently unavailable.

He passed away on 9<sup>th</sup> November 1962, at the age of 75.

### *Some of his notable works:*

1. *New Pali Course Parts I & II* (1937)
2. *New Pali Course Part III* (1950)
3. *Concise Pali-English Dictionary* (1949)
4. *English-Pali Dictionary* (1954)
5. *Pāḷipāṭhāvalī* (1926 Sinhalese version; 2003 English version)

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1. *Sri Buddhadatta Charithaya* (autobiography, 1954) (currently unavailable)
2. *On the Path*: Gunadasa Liyanage (1995)
3. <http://sinhalasangha.wordpress.com/polwatte-buddhadhatta-maha-swaminwahanse/>

### Venerable Rerukane Chandawimala<sup>5</sup>

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Ven. Rerukane Chandawimala was one of the pioneers who had made a significant contribution in the development of Buddhist order and to propagate Buddhism in Sri Lanka by writing large number of books in simple Sinhalese language.

He was born on 19<sup>th</sup> July, 1897 in a rural village called Rerukana at Adhikari Pattuwa, Raigam Korala, Sri Lanka. He was the eldest son of Don Bastian De Paulis Gunawardhana, his father, and mother Munasinghege Podinona. He had one sister and four brothers. His father was a pious and devout person, who always visited temple accompanied by his children.

He was ordained at the age of 9 under the guidance of the Ven. U. Vinayalankara, a Burmese monk, in 1906 with other 26 boys. After ordination, he was renamed as Rerukane Chandawimala.

While he was still a novice he had learnt by heart some monastic books such as *Pāli varanægilla*, *Dhammapadaya*, *Sāmañera baṇa daham pota* with the supervision of Ven. Batuwita Nandarama.

He along with other novice monks was sent to Myanmar in order to further their monastic training and learn from eminent Burmese teachers of the time. They reached Burma on 27<sup>th</sup> of January 1908, and stayed in the temple of the Mahānāyaka Thero of the Swejin Nikāya. He lived there for about ten years and studied Burmese, Pāli, Buddhism with the commentaries

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<sup>5</sup> Contributed by Ven. Jambughahaitiye Dhammaloka

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and sub-commentaries with particular emphasis on studying *Abhidhamma* and practicing *Satipaṭṭhāna* meditation. Eventually, he became fluent in Pāli, Burmese and had a sound knowledge on Buddhism. He received his higher ordination (*upasampadā*) on 26<sup>th</sup> of October 1917 at the *Dhammikārāma sīmā* in Myanmar.

After completing his studies in Burma, he returned back to Sri Lanka and took his residence at the *Visuddhārāma* temple, Dematagoda. During his stay at the *Visuddhārāma* temple, Rerukane Chandawimala, with the support and co-operation of the Ven. Arangala Siridhamma, started to teach *Abhidhamma* to the novice monks and laypersons. Then, the temples at Panadura, Bolgoda and Kiriwattuduwa were his next residences.

His first book, 'Nirvāṇa Viniścaya' was written when he stayed in the temple in Panadura. Since then he has written 27 books in his life time. They are on different themes such as *Abhidhamma*, meditation, and the basic concepts of Buddhism. Because of his books, Rerukane Chadawimala is a well-known figure in Sri Lanka. Whatever concepts elucidated by him in his books are in very simple language and manner.

The other great service of him was the propagation of *vipassanā* meditation in Sri Lanka. He had introduced the traditional method *satipaṭṭhāna* meditation of Myanmar to Sri Lanka and contributed in reviving meditation at the *Vipassanā* Meditation Centre at Kanduboda. Doing meditation was a main part of his daily routine. He was a kind, generous and charitable person.

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Some of his famous disciples are Ven. Godigamuwe Sorata, Ven. Henegoda Kalyanadhamma and Ven. Kirioruwe Dhammananda, while there are many more, to name a few.

Appreciating the great service of Rerukane Chandawimala to the Buddhist literature and the society the Pandit degree was awarded by the Oriental Studies Society of Sri Lanka, Professorship of *Abhidhamma* by Sri Jayawardhanapura University, *Sāhityacak ravarti* by Sri Jayawardhanapura and *Pravacana Viśārada* degree by the Bhikkhu's University of Sri Lanka. The devotees of the Vinayālaṅkārarāmaya established a trust called Sri Candawimala Book Preservation Board to maintain his books for posterity.

After the passing away of the Mahānāyaka Thero, Rerukane Chandawimala was elected as the new Mahānāyaka Thero of the Swejin Nikāya of Sri Lanka. Dedicating his whole life for the development and dissemination of Buddhism the Most Venerable Rerukane Candawimala Mahānāyaka Thero passed away on 04<sup>th</sup> of July 1996.

***Some of his notable works:***

1. *Caturārya Satyaya* (Four Noble Truths)
2. *Vidarśanā Bhāvanā Kramaya* (Method of *Vipassanā* Meditation)
3. *Bauddhayāge Atpota* (Hand-Book of the Buddhist)
4. *Vañcaka Dharma hā Cittopakkleśa Dharma* (Plausible Defilements and Sub-Defilements)
5. *Pāramitā Prakaraṇaya* (Exposition of Perfections)
6. *Bodhipāḷḷika Dharma Vistaraya* (Description of Thirty Seven Enlightenment Factors)

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7. *Maṅgala Dharma Vistaraya* (Description of Good Omens)
8. *Paṭiccasamuppāda Vivaraṇaya* (Annotation of Theory of Causality)
9. *Vinaya Karma Pota* ( The Book of Ecclesiastical Rules)
10. *Paṭṭhāna Mahā Prakaraṇa Sannaya* (The Commentary on *Paṭṭhāna Mahā Prakaraṇa*)
11. *Abhidharma Mārgaya* (The Way of *Abhidharma*)
12. *Buddha Nīti Saṅgrahaya* (Collection of the Buddha's Advices)
13. *Abhidharmaye Mūlika Karuṇu* (Fundamental Factors of *Abhidhamma*)
14. *Anuvāda Sahita Abhidharmārtha Saṅgrahaya* (*Abhidharmārtha Saṅgraha* with Translation)
15. *Paurāṇika Satipaṭṭhāna Bhāvanā Kramaya* (Ancient Method of *Satipaṭṭhāna* Meditation)
16. *Satipaṭṭhāna Bhāvanā Vivecanaya* (The Review of *Satipaṭṭhāna* Meditation)
17. *Dharma Vinīscaya - Prathama Bhāgaya* (Determination of Doctrine)
18. *Śāsanāvatarāṇaya* (Entering into the Order)
19. *Puṇyopadeśaya* (Advices for Merits)
20. *Sūvisi Maha Guṇaya* (The Great Twenty Four Qualities)
21. *Pohoya Dinaya* (Poya Day)
22. *Cattāḷīsākāra Mahā Vipassanā Bhāvanā* (Forty Folds *Vipassanā* Meditation)
23. *Upasampadā Śīlaya* (Precepts of High-Ordination)
24. *Keles Ekdahas Pansiyaya* (One Thousand and Five Hundred Defilements)

25. *Anuvāda Sahita Ubhaya Prātimokṣaya* (The Dual *Prātimokṣa* with Translation)
26. *Nirvāṇa Viniścaya saha Punarutpatti Kramaya* (Determination of *Nirvāṇa* and the Mode of Rebirth)

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2. Dhammananda Thero, Kirioruwe, “RerukaneCandawimala maha nā himipāṇo”, *Mekala Nivunu Ætto*, C. Tanppuliāracci (ed.), Śrī Candawimala Dhamma Books Preservation Board, Pokuṇuviṭa, 1998
3. *Budusasuna Pubudu Kaḷa Śrī Laṅkā Śvejin Nikāya Siyawasa*, K.B.A. Edmond and C. Tanippuliāracci (eds.), Śrī Candawimala Buddhist Books Preservation Board, Pokuṇuviṭa, 2006

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### 5. Venerable Bhikkhu Bodhi

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Born as Jeffrey Block to Jewish parents in Brooklyn, New York, United States on 10th December 1944, Bhikkhu Bodhi is an American Theravada Buddhist monk, who has edited, translated and authored several books on Theravada Buddhism.

In 1966, he obtained a B.A. in Western philosophy from Brooklyn College, City University of New York, and in 1972 a PhD in Western philosophy from Claremont Graduate School, California.

His interest in Buddhism started around 1965, while at Brooklyn College, with books on Zen Buddhism by D.T. Suzuki and Alan Watts. In 1966 at Claremont Graduate School in southern California, he became acquainted with a Buddhist monk from Vietnam named Thich Giac Duc, a doctoral student at the same residence hall. Venerable Thich Giac Duc taught him the practice of mindfulness of breathing as well as the fundamentals of Buddhism. After several months he decided to become a monk and asked the Vietnamese monk if he could ordain him. The monk agreed to do so, and thus he was ordained as a *sāmaṇera* [a novice] in the Vietnamese Mahayana order in May 1967.

Bhikkhu Bodhi says that ‘by that time he had already decided he wanted to go to Asia to receive full ordination, to study Buddhism, and to make the task of practicing and propagating Buddhism my life work’. Meanwhile, he had met several Sri Lankan monks passing through the U.S., most notably a well known preacher Ven. Piyadassi Thera (1914–1998), who

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recommended Ven. Ananda Maitreya (1896–1998), a prominent Sri Lankan scholar-monk, as a teacher.

In August 1972 Jeffrey Block wrote to the Most Ven. Ananda Maitreya, requesting permission to come to his monastery for ordination and training, for which he received an affirmative answer. He went to Sri Lanka and took ordination with Ven. Ananda Maitreya at his monastery Sri Nandaramaya, Udumulla, Balangoda. Now as Bhikkhu Bodhi he lived there for three years studying Buddhism and Pāli under his preceptor. Later he was invited by Ven. Nyanaponika Thera, the well-known German monk, to stay at the Forest Hermitage in Kandy. Bhikkhu Bodhi eventually spent many years there caring for him in his old age and helping with the work of the Buddhist Publication Society.

Bhikkhu Bodhi with utmost humility describes of himself as a translator when he says he ‘never intended to become a Buddhist scholar or a translator of Pāli texts; I was initially attracted to Buddhism through the practice of meditation’. It was his first teacher, Ven. Giac Duc, who impressed on him the need for systematic study of the Dhamma to serve as a proper foundation for both meditation practice and for teaching the Dhamma in the West. When he went to Sri Lanka and took ordination, his original intention was to study the texts for several years and then go off to meditate.

With regard to him becoming a Pāli texts translator, he comments that while studying Pāli under the Most Ven. Ananda Maitreya, and ‘when reading the suttas in the original, I often translated whole passages for myself – both canonical texts and

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their commentaries – and thus I gradually became immersed in translation. To acquire the foundation for practice, I studied the Sutta Pitaka in a systematic manner, using the material I read as topics of contemplation in order to transform my own understanding. The type of understanding I was aspiring towards was not the objective understanding that an academic scholar would attempt to acquire, but a subjective, personal comprehension of the essential meaning of the Dhamma. I was intent on seeing how the Dhamma imparted to us by the Buddha was addressing my own condition as a human being and as a follower of the Buddhist path. This eventually entailed a wholesale revision of my Western world-view to bring it into accord with the Dhamma.”

In 1984, he was appointed English-language editor of the Buddhist Publication Society (in Sri Lanka), and its president in 1988. In 2000, Bhikkhu Bodhi gave the keynote address at the United Nations' first official Vesak celebration. In 2002, after retiring as editor of BPS, he returned to the United States. He currently teaches at Bodhi Monastery (Lafayette, New Jersey) and Chuang Yen Monastery (Carmel, New York) and is the chairman of the Yin Shun Foundation.

Bhikkhu Bodhi is founder of the organisation “Buddhist Global Relief”, which is fighting hunger across the world.

### *Some of his notable works:*

1. *The Noble Eightfold Path: Way to the End of Suffering* (1984, BPS; 2000, Pariyatti)

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2. *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya* (with Bhikkhu Nanamoli, 1995, Wisdom Publications)
3. *Nyanaponika: A Farewell Tribute Life Sketch, Bibliography, Appreciations, and Selections from the Writings...* (Buddhist Publication Society:1995)
4. *Great Discourse on Causation: Mahānidāna Sutta and Its Commentaries* (BPS: 1998)
5. *Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: An Anthology of Suttas from the Anguttara Nikaya* (with Nyanaponika Thera, 2000, Altamira Press)
6. *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya* (2000, Wisdom Publications)
7. *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma: The Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha of Ācariya Anuruddha* (2000, BPS Pariyatti)
8. *In the Buddha's Words: An Anthology of Discourses from the Pāli Canon* (2005, Wisdom Publications)
9. *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya* (2012, Wisdom Publications)
10. *The Vision of Dhamma: Buddhist Writings of Nyanaponika Thera (Vipassana Meditation and the Buddha's Teachings)* (with Erich Fromm: 2000)

***Bhikkhu Bodhi's on-line courses include:***

1. *"The Buddha's Teaching As It Is"* (1981)
2. *"A course in Pāli Language"* (2003)
3. *Majjhima Nikaya lectures* (2003–2008)

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### Venerable Lokanatha

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Venerable Lokanatha, who was popularly known as Italian Buddhist monk, was born on 26<sup>th</sup> December 1897 in Italy in the celebrated family of Cioffi and given the name of Salvatore, meaning the Saviour, he lived up to the glorious name.

Brought up in an atmosphere of talented culture, he had his education in Columbia University, wherefrom he had his B.Sc. degree in 1922. He also worked at Cooper Institute and attended to biological and medical research at the Rockefeller. It was the scientific impulse in him which led him to Buddhism, which he embraced not long after graduation. Shortly he was on pilgrimage to the places sacred to Buddhism and was ordained a Buddhist monk in Myanmar in 1925. Thereafter he was ardently resolved to propagate the teachings of the Buddha all over the world, for peace and happiness in the human family.

Returning home after mastering the precepts and practices of Buddhism in six months, he found the general atmosphere not favourable to his new religion in Italy. He returned to India on foot walking across Southern Europe and Asia Minor, reaching back Burma in 1928. The five years that followed were spent in deep study and meditations, his time being divided between monasteries and the Himalayan caves and forests. Strictly observing the 13 *dhutangas*, he emerged towards the end of 1932 with a spiritual radiance around him. From the year 1928 throughout his life he observed the self-imposed rule of sleeping in the sitting posture: only in his death he lay on his back.

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Three Buddhist missionary expeditions were launched by the Venerable Lokanatha in the years 1933, 1934 and 1935 from Myanmar, Thailand and Sri Lanka respectively to Buddha-Gaya in India, where the Buddha had attained Enlightenment. Great was the enthusiasm aroused and great was the awakening that these Expeditions occasioned.

Ven. Lokanatha wrote extensively and published several booklets with a view to use these in his missionary expeditions in the West: he also completed a large volume dealing with his missionary work in the East. Unfortunately, while the plans for a missionary tour of Europe and America were getting finalised, the World War II broke out. And, all those precious writings were lost. Besides, during the War he was interned in India. Returning back to Burma after the War in October 1946, he found the Buddhist Foreign Mission organized at Mandalay, under the auspices of which he was sent out in July 1947 for a Buddhist survey of the contemporary world, with special reference to the U.S.A. This marks a landmark in the history of Myanmar, for, it was the first Mission of its kind ever launched from the shores of the country. The magnificent outcome of this Mission is detailed in his work "*Girdling the Globe with Truth*". Preaching through Singapore and Malaya, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Manila, he sped across the Pacific through Hawaii to the U.S.A., and after a very successful tour of the States and preachings in England and on the Continent, he arrived in Sri Lanka in 1950 to attend and address the First Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists. In March 1951 he was back to Myanmar, where right-royal receptions awaited for him in Yangon and Mandalay. In Mandalay he hoisted the World

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Buddhist Flag on 24th March 1951 - for the first time in Myanmar.

After 1951 he preached extensively and repeatedly throughout Myanmar, also dividing his time between Myanmar and India and Sri Lanka - mostly staying in Myanmar. He attended and addressed the World Fellowship of Buddhists' Conference in Yangon in 1954. Also, he was elected the Spiritual Patron of the *Mahajayanti* Celebrations in 1956 in Pakistan.

It was in the early thirties of this century that the Ven. Lokanatha and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the great leader of the Untouchables in India, contacted each other. The correspondence between them reveals the wholesome and lasting influence the Venerable exercised over Dr. Ambedkar in favour of Buddhism. However, it took shape in the conversion of millions of Indians to Buddhism. The final decision for Dr. Ambedkar's formal conversion was made in 1954, when Dr. Ambedkar by then was the father of the Constitution of free India. It was then that he positively decided for formal entry into the Buddhist fold in 1956. Besides, Dr. Ambedkar showed marked keenness to have the Ven. Lokanatha in India to help in the cause of educating the mass of new converts in the Buddhist values.

Venerable Lokanatha was a staunch vegetarian. Ever beaming with youthful vigour and ever with the spiritual aura of *metta* about him, his very presence filled the atmosphere with peace, infusing all around him with the sterling impulses of the Buddhist values. Devotees flocked to him from all ranks of life; intellectuals, scientists and people in authority in different lands

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found themselves spellbound before his arguments; many were the friends he had among the wealthy, the intellectuals, and particularly among those spiritually advanced; innumerable were the converts he brought to Buddhism and more numerous are the people across the world in whose hearts seeds of the *Dhamma* have been sown through his preachings.

The Venerable was throughout in excellent health, taking due care as much of his body as of his mind, having trained both to a high grade discipline. However, towards the end of 1965 he developed a sore on his forehead, which turned cancerous. While preparing for his visit to the U.S.A. for proper treatment, he succumbed to the temptation of trying indigenous treatment, against all expert advice. He passed away on 25<sup>th</sup> May 1966. On 29<sup>th</sup> May 1966, his body was taken in a stately procession to *Swezigon Monastery* in Maymyo (Pyin Oo Lwin) where it lies for all to pay homage.

Having served the cause of Buddhism in Myanmar for over forty years, he is the only Buddhist Westerner in history with such a long, devoted and continuous contact with the country. Also, he will be remembered for popularising Cemetary Meditations.

Born in Italy, educated in America and ordained in Myanmar, the Venerable Lokanatha, after preaching the *Dhamma* in the three continents, leaves his earthly remains in Maymyo (Pyin Oo Lwin).

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## Venerable Buddhaghosa Mahasthavir

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Ven. Buddhaghosa Mahasthavir was a Nepalese Buddhist monk who worked to revive Theravada Buddhism in Nepal in the 1940s in the face of suppression by the Rana regime. A simple yet learned monk of scriptures and practitioner of the path; he was the founder of *Pariyatti Shiksha* (Buddhist education) in Nepal. In 2006, he was named the fifth *Saṅghanāyaka* of Nepal.

He was born as Sapta Ratna Vajracharya on 12<sup>th</sup> October 1921 to father Purnananda and mother Surjamaya Vajracharya in Kvabahal, Kathmandu. In 1940, he went to Kushinagar, India and was ordained as a novice monk (*sāmaṇera*) under Bhante U Chandamuni of Kushinagar Burmese Vihara. He was given the dharma name Buddhaghosa. He then went to Myanmar where he studied Buddhism and meditation, and in 1943 received higher ordination (*upasampadā*) as a full monk in Mandalay. He stayed there for six years. He is known to be the first son of a Vajracharya family to become a Theravada Buddhist monk.

The 1940s were bad times for Buddhist monks, and a number of them had been expelled for preaching and producing Buddhist literatures. After the fall of Rana regime and establishment of democracy in Nepal in 1951, Theravada Buddhist monks could preach freely.

Having returned back to Nepal, Ven. Buddhaghosa accepted the invitation to dwell at the Sumangala Buddha Vihara, the first vihara donated to Theravada school of Buddhism in Yala (Patan) by the residents of the area. From there he taught visitors what the Buddha had taught by analyzing the essence of Buddhism and its practices, and comparisons in the teachings of two schools of Theravada and Vajrayana. He, in fact, dedicated himself in spreading the message of the Buddha.

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He was the founder of *Pariyatti Shiksha* (Buddhist education) in Nepal and teaching them to the youth of Nepal in scientific way for the first time since 1963. Prior to that, Buddhism mainly limited to monks and nuns and preached as sermons in temples in Nepal. The *Pariyatti Shiksha* attracted hundreds of youth and children and attending to Saturday Dhamma Schools opened in Buddhist temples. The weekly dhamma classes attracted large numbers of youths, and the study of Buddhism progressed beyond sermons and services. Today hundreds of youth learned in Buddhism are direct products of his mission of propagation of Buddha's message. Noted monks and nuns of today's in Nepal and abroad for their religious services – Bhante Suman gala, Bhante Sudassana (Sudarshan), Bhante Jnanapunnika, Guruma Madhavi, Guruma Dhammavati are his disciples.

Besides his teachings, Ven. Buddhaghosa has authored, translated or edited 22 books in Nepal Bhasa and Nepali on the Tipitaka, the Theravada Buddhist scriptures, and contributed articles in numerous journals and magazines in Pāli and Nepāli.

Ven. Buddhaghosa also attended the Sixth Buddhist Council (*Chattha Sangāyanā*) which was held Myanmar, from 1954 to 1956. In 1999, Ven. Buddhaghosa was honoured with the title of '*Aggamahāsaddhammajotikadhaja*' (light of supreme teaching) by the government of Myanmar for his contribution to Buddhism.

He passed away on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2011, at the age of 89.

### Reference:

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### **Shan State Sangha Council**

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With the objectives of the purification and propagation of Buddhasāsanā and to make Buddhism accessible to the people of Shan State, Sanghas from different parts in Shan State gathered together in the Aungsiri Cinema Hall in Loilem, Southern Shan State on 18<sup>th</sup> 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> November 1957. After careful discussions, it was decided that a sangha council should be formed and named it “The Shan State Sangha Council” (SSSC). On 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> May 1971, another general meeting was held by the council and it was agreed upon that the secretariat of the SSSC should be based in Panglong, Shan State.

#### ***The SSSC is comprised of:***

1. President and two Vice-Presidents
2. Secretary General and two Assistant Secretary Generals
3. Treasurer and an Assistant Treasurer
4. An Accountant
5. Six Coordinators

The SSSC appoints senior Shan monks as members of the Board of Elders to give guidance and advice.

#### ***Education Committee and its Objectives:***

1. To translate Buddha’s teachings from Pāli into Shan
2. To study and practise Buddha’s teachings
3. To hold examinations
4. To train and produce teachers of the Dhamma (*Dhammā-cariya*)

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The 1<sup>st</sup> International Pāli Conference  
in Shan State, Myanmar

## "Influential Figures in Learning or Meditation in Theravāda Buddhism in 19-20<sup>th</sup> Centuries"

in Honour of the 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration of  
Ven. Prof. Dr. Khammai Dhammasami, DPhil (Oxford)  
Veluwan Monastery, Taunggyi, Shan State, Myanmar

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### Organizing Committee

#### Organizers

The Shan State Sangha Council, Panglong, Shan State, the Republic  
of Union of Myanmar

#### Conference Co-Sponsors

- The Shan State Sangha Council, Panglong, Shan State, Union  
of Myanmar
- Sāriputta College, Muse, Shan State, Union of Myanmar
- Veluwan Monastery, Taunggyi, Shan State, Union of  
Myanmar
- Wat Rama 9 Golden Jubilee Temple, Bangkok, Thailand
- Sāsana Mandaing Pali University, Bago, Union Myanmar
- Kangyi Pariyatti Institute, Yawngghwe, Shan State, Union  
Myanmar
- Oxford Buddha Vihara, UK, Singapore, Malaysia and  
Myanmar (Yangon)

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**Academic Co-coordinators:** Ven. Devinda (Dhammācariya), BA, Hons. (BPU), MA (Kelaniya, Singapore), PhD candidate (Mahidol)  
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**Local Correspondents:** Ven. Vicitta (Dhammācariya), MA (Kelaniya), Taung Pauk Monastery, Mawlamyine, Mon State, Union of Myanmar Email: [klveta@gmail.com](mailto:klveta@gmail.com), Mobile- 0095- 94 201 887 66

Ven. Ven. Sīridhamma (Dhammācariya), MA (Kelaniya), Veluwan Monastery, Taunggyi, Shan State, Union of Myanmar  
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dhammānudhamma paṭipannā saṃghaṃ sobhenti".**

"Those who are accomplished in wisdom, disciplined, confident, deeply learned, hearers of the Dhamma and living according to the Dhamma, illumine the community".

**A.IV, Sutta 07, Sobhana Sutta**

